Lucy and the Master.

Painted by Sir J. E. Millais, Bart., R. A. — Etched by H. Macbeth-Raeburn.

The Buckner Library Edition

THE BRIDE OF LAMMERMOOR
THE BLACK DWARF

By SIR WALTER SCOTT, Bart.

WITH INTRODUCTORY ESSAY AND NOTES BY ANDREW LANG ❧ *ILLUSTRATED*

With ETCHINGS *by* MACBETH-RAEBURN

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TALES OF MY LANDLORD.

THIRD SERIES.

Hear, Land o' Cakes and brither Scots,
Frae Maidenkirk to Jonny Groats',
If there's a hole in a' your coats,
I rede ye tent it;
A chiel's amang you takin' notes,
An' faith he'll prent it!

BURNS.

Ahora bien, dixo il Cura, traedme, senor huésped, aquesos libros, que los quiero ver. Que me place, respondió el; y entrando, en su aposento, sacó dél una maletilla vieja cerrada con una cadenilla, y abriéndola, halló en ella tres libros grandes y unos papeles de muy buena letra escritos de mano. — DON QUIXOTE, Parte I. Capitulo 32.

It is mighty well, said the priest; pray, landlord, bring me those books, for I have a mind to see them. With all my heart, answered the host; and, going to his chamber, he brought out a little old cloke-bag, with a padlock and chain to it, and, opening it, he took out three large volumes, and some manuscript papers written in a fine character. — JARVIS'S *Translation.*

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

TO

THE BRIDE OF LAMMERMOOR.

FEW things in the history of literature are better known than the tale of the composition of "The Bride of Lammermoor." "Fredericus I. in tormentis pinxit," the ancestor of Frederick the Great wrote on a portrait which this royal amateur worked at when he had the gout. "Gualterus Scotus in tormentis scripsit" might have been the motto, as Scott himself remarked,[1] of "The Bride of Lammermoor" and "Ivanhoe." These novels were composed amid spasms of a pain so severe that Hogg declares he has seen Scott's shirt "burned to an izel" by hot applications, to which the patient was insensible, so severe was his pain. "Now if I had given way to mere feeling," said Scott to Mr. Gillies, "and ceased to work, it is a question whether the disease might not have taken deeper root, and become incurable. The best way is, if possible, to triumph over disease by setting it at defiance, somewhat on the same principle as one avoids being stung by boldly grasping a nettle." His malady, as it saved him from being interrupted by visitors, practically gave him more leisure for his work. "During the severe conflict with illness, he scarcely for one entire day relinquished his literary tasks."

[1] Gillies, p. 240.

Thus among the many great lessons of Scott's life he taught by example the possibility of overcoming pain through courage, and succeeded in doing what the Stoics vaunted that their ideal Wise Man could achieve.

"The Heart of Mid-Lothian" had appeared in June 1818. Scott began "The Bride of Lammermoor" in the autumn of the same year. The subject, taken from his mother's old tradition, had been in his mind for some time, and was originally meant to have appeared in company with "The Heart of Mid-Lothian." In that case he would probably have treated the topic briefly, in one volume, like "A Legend of Montrose." Among his minor works of the same period was the collection and contribution of materials towards an edition of Burt's "Letters from the North of Scotland," undertaken by Mr. Jamieson, the collector of Ballads. Unluckily, Mr. Jamieson's friendly relations with Scott were afterwards interrupted, and a correspondence, inscrutably angry on Mr. Jamieson's side, closed their acquaintance. Throughout the winter, Sir Walter's health was so bad that he occasionally laid "The Bride" aside, and worked at his essays published in "Provincial Antiquities."[1] This was purely a labour of love, but when the book proved successful Scott did not refuse to accept the beautiful original drawings by Turner which were engraved for the volume. In April he was still obliged to describe himself to Southey as "very totterish." Jaundice had been added to his afflictions. The crises of the tormenting malady would last for eight or ten hours: "if I had not the strength of a team of horses, I could never have fought through it." In an unpublished letter to Miss Joanna Baillie he describes the anxiety of his dog, Maida, who comforted him by constant

[1] "Miscellaneous Prose Works," vol. vii.

attention by his bedside. At last "laudanum became necessary in the most liberal doses," and possibly this may explain that extraordinary mental phenomenon described by Ballantyne, Scott's entire oblivion of every word and scene in his own new novel. His Highland piper tried a very old cure out of the resources of folklore: he selected twelve stones from twelve southward-running burns, such as the stream which flows through Glendearg to the Tweed, and recommended that Scott should sleep on them and be whole. But Scott explained, by an original addition to the spell, that the stones must be wrapped in the petticoat of a widow who had never wished to be married again.[1] He still endeavoured to take exercise, riding out on Sybil Grey "like Death on the pale horse," but through this miserable April he was still hard at work on "The Bride." On April 8 he wrote to Constable saying that he had begun to dictate: the pain when he applied his breast to the desk was too great to be endured.

Scott's amanuenses were William Laidlaw and John Ballantyne. Laidlaw, who lived near Abbotsford, was on the spot. His hand, if it be his which takes up the pen where Scott dropped it in the manuscript of "Reliquiæ Trotcosienses," is not that of a very graceful or ready scribe. Indeed, Lockhart remarks on Ballantyne's superior rapidity. According to Lockhart, John would write without interruption, while Laidlaw's enthusiasm exploded in cries of "Gude keep us a', — the like o' that!" The Editor has heard from family tradition that Laidlaw became so much excited by the story that he would urge Scott to tell on — "Go on, Sir Walter!" — when the author stopped for a moment to reflect. If disturbing, Laidlaw's observations were, at least, highly encouraging. Occasionally

[1] Lockhart, vi. 49.

Sir Walter's pangs overcame even his fortitude, and he would cry out aloud, so that Lockhart once heard the sounds when walking in the gardens of Abbotsford. We all know Scott's affectingly humorous remark when Laidlaw wanted to stop the work during these paroxysms. "Nay, Willie, only see that the doors are fast. I would fain keep all the cry as well as all the wool to ourselves; but as to giving over work, that can only be when I am in the woollen"—a prophecy fulfilled to the letter. On one occasion he feared that "the mischief was getting at his mind," and, to make trial of his sanity, turned an old German ballad into English rhyme. The result was the poem of "The Noble Morringer."

In these circumstances, darkened yet more by the death of the Duke of Buccleugh, who had been to him all that a chief and that a friend can be, Sir Walter finished "The Bride of Lammermoor," and the accompanying tale, "A Legend of Montrose." James Ballantyne drew up a brief memoir before his death, in which he observes that Scott was not able to rise from his bed at the time when the books were published (June 10, 1819). "He assured me that when it was first put into his hands in a complete shape, he did not recall one single incident, character, or conversation which it contained! He did not desire me to understand, nor did I understand, that his illness had erased from his memory the original incidents of the story, with which he had been acquainted from his boyhood. But he remembered nothing else."

As he read his own book he was haunted by the fear of meeting some passage very glaring and fantastic, but comforted himself by reflecting that Ballantyne would not have allowed it to pass. He felt it "monstrous, gross, and grotesque; but still the worst of it made me laugh, and I trusted the good-natured public would not

be less indulgent." Perhaps the only similar experience is that spoken of by Mr. Thackeray in his letters to Mrs. Brookfield. He had a severe illness while engaged on "Pendennis," and in the book, when published, he found passages of which he had no recollection. By a curious incident, Sir Walter's illness during the composition of his novel helped to maintain his incognito, and shroud his secret. The "Scots Magazine" wrote: "It has long been infallible here that the Great Unknown, if he is not Walter Scott, must needs be no other than a certain mighty personage whose name 'well may we guess but dare not tell.' It seems pretty evident now that Walter Scott cannot be the man, if we consider that this distinguished individual has for a long time past been in a most distressing and painful state of health, and quite unequal, surely, to any such vigorous exercise of his powers, unless he actually be that other personage himself." "Aut Gualterus aut Diabolus!"

Lockhart describes "The Bride of Lammermoor" as "to my fancy the most pure and powerful of all the stories that Scott ever penned." The most noted politician and the greatest poet of our age are said to hold it in the same esteem, and to regard it as the greatest of Sir Walter's novels. Probably the world of readers does not care for the "unhappy ending," for which Sir Walter, in his last days, expressed a certain remorse, but the legend was too strong for him, and he was obliged to kill Lucy. "Of all the murders I ever committed in that way," he said at Rome to Don Luigi Santa Croce, "and few men have been guilty of more, there is none that went so much to my heart as the poor Bride of Lammermoor; but it could not be helped, it is all true." Thackeray admits that the novel was no great favourite of his, and that, after one reading, in boyhood, he never cared to pick up the Master's hat

which he left drifting in the Kelpie's Flow. The ancient story, which Scott thought was perhaps better told by his mother in her ten minutes' chat, defies the optimist, and even Dumas never accepted Thackeray's invitation to rescue the Master in a smuggling vessel, carry him to the Low Countries, and start him afresh on a more fortunate career.

Edgar of Ravenswood, like Charles I., was born with an unlucky fate, to melancholy fortunes. As to the historical facts, no research throws any light on the events concerning which Bucklaw kept silence. There is, however, an interesting letter of William Clerk's (Darsie Latimer) to Sir Walter, dated September 1, 1829. The Bride was Clerk's great-grand-aunt, and in the ramifications of Scottish genealogy was of kin to Sir Walter himself. Wigtownshire tradition declared, according to Clerk, that when the door of the bridal chamber was forced the window was found to be open. It was inferred that the rejected lover, Lord Rutherford, had contrived to enter the house, had himself stabbed the bridegroom, and had made his escape by the window. The silence of Bucklaw was supposed to favour this view, but, if the Bucklaw of real life was like the Bucklaw of fiction, he would not have let such an outrage pass unpunished. Clerk ends: "It is but fair to give the unhappy victim — who was by all accounts a most gentle and feminine creature — the benefit of an explanation on a doubtful point."[1] Great is the loyalty of a true Scot to his aunts!

Admitting the tragic nature of the tale, Scott naturally sought to enliven it by side-scenes of humour. Hence came Caleb Balderstone, on whom, as Lockhart says, "the general opinion was not then, nor do I believe it ever since has been, very favourable." Scott admitted that he "might have sprinkled rather too

[1] Journal, ii. 300.

much parsley on his chicken," and the part is assuredly too much of a "character-part." The devices of Caleb are frequently reiterated, and are monotonous, like all practical jokes. An infinitely better relief is afforded by the genial and manly character of Bucklaw, a fellow with faults, but still, it may be feared, a person more sympathetic to Scott than the Master. In Edgar the novelist was obliged, by the nature of the case, to put forth his strength on a hero. The Master of Ravenswood is not like the earlier heroes — a mere looker on, a mere pivot about whom the action centres and moves, while he contributes little to the action. Edgar is compelled by fate to accept his fortunes, not to flee from them as he had wished and intended to do. Considered historically, he is, indeed, an interesting personage. He inherits the blood and the traditions of a long Scottish line of nobles. Only the student who has read the ancient criminal trials, or has followed the history of the Stuarts and of the Reformation, knows how fierce, unscrupulous, untamable, how perfidious, how daring, how reckless of means and insatiate of revenge were the Scottish nobles. It is to a family as high of heart and bloody of hand as the Douglases, or Ruthvens, or Hamiltons, that Edgar of Ravenswood succeeds, inheriting nothing but their passions, and the sacred duty of vengeance. But times had altered, law had begun to be a power, and with changed times had come a changed type of character. Thus the Master is somewhat in the position of Hamlet — he cannot shoot or stab Sir William Ashton, as any one of his ancestors would have done, or procured to be done, with no more scruple than he would have felt in trampling on an adder. "His mortal foe was under his roof, yet his sentiments towards him were neither those of a feudal enemy nor of a true Christian. He felt as if he could neither forgive him in the one

character, nor follow forth his vengeance in the other, but that he was making a base and dishonourable composition between his resentment against the father and his affection for his daughter." Then this Hamlet finds his Ophelia — for Lucy, in her soft and fragile beauty, her dutifulness to parental authority, and her final madness, corresponds to Ophelia with some closeness. The position and training of the Master made inevitable, perhaps, the ferocity, as it seems to modern readers, of his behaviour in the scene when the betrothal is solemnly disavowed. But this relapse into ancestral instincts is allowed to pass away, and he is but a broken-hearted man, who rides out to his last duel, and never reaches the ground. The modern world, the new times, have done their work — they have broken a high heart, "and there is the end of an auld sang."

Such is the tragedy — a fate worthy of Shakspeare's handling, a series of sorrows that lie somewhat off the path of Sir Walter's genial and buoyant nature. His wholesome character shrank from "problems," as they are now called, and he seldom cared to consider too curiously, to glance beyond the bounds of what is known and permitted, to scale the unapproachable heights, to fathom the unexplored deeps of human personality. Edgar muses but little on the ultimate riddles of life, even when, like Hamlet, he has his interview with the Gravedigger — the Gravedigger who, unlike his creator, "hated fords at a' times." In brief, Edgar does not soliloquise enough for the modern taste in the gloomy and the fatefully perplexed; as usual, Scott lets his story tell itself in action. It was not his habit to rejoice in *un beau ténébreux*, yet that is the *rôle* which circumstances thrust on the Master of Ravenswood. Hence it may be that Scott did not wholly give his heart to his own creation, whom

another might have made, if not a Hamlet, at least a René. How eloquently would Edgar, or the moralising author, have arraigned, in a modern novel, the government of the universe! But that kind of writing was uncongenial to Scott. "I have been, perhaps, the most voluminous writer of my day," he said at Rome, "I am fast shuffling off the stage. But it *is* a comfort to me to think that I have tried to unsettle no man's faith, to corrupt no man's principle, and that I have written nothing which on my death-bed I should wish to blot." His genius did not strive to soar where Shakspeare's soars in "Hamlet"; he respected the veil that shrouds the Sphinx, he made no guesses at her riddle, he urged no reproaches against the Judge of the Earth. The character and fortunes of the Master gave him every opportunity, but, whether we blame or praise him for it, there was here no temptation to Walter Scott. "The musings of young Ravenswood were deep," but they were also "unwitnessed." Unwitnessed, unspoken, they remain. Scott anticipates Mr. Carlyle's advice about "consuming our own smoke," the smoke of ill savour that flies up like an evil and unavailing sacrifice, from the fierce and vain resentments of the heart, to the disdainful heavens.

The absence of all this indignant curiosity about the ruling of our fortunes does not make the tragedy less tragic, does not deprive it of the terror that lives in fates inherited by no guilt of the sufferer, but removes it far from the modern temper. Remote, too, from emancipated readers may be the simple endurance of the poor bride of Lammermoor. She too is placed in the tragic conflict between two duties — her duty to her own heart and her lover, and that owed to her mother. Lady Ashton spares no influence, either of maternal authority, of religion in the person of the Minister, or even of black magic. "Acheronta movebo" is

her motto, when she places the malignant hag by Lucy's side. The manners of the time were favourable to this abuse of the *patria potestas*. Had Lucy possessed the noble courage and endurance of Clarissa Harlowe, even then she might have succumbed to the devices of her mother, and might have brought, on a fancy compelled into superstition, the curse of the Broken Vow. Gentle, shrinking, and feminine she is, and so may be reckoned tame by the heroines of a new age. But even an armed and iron maidenhood might have been paralysed by the vast resources arrayed against it, and where Lucy failed we cannot be certain that Di Vernon would have triumphed.

In one part of the construction "The Bride of Lammermoor" attains an almost epical grandeur. The gradual darkening of the evil omens as the storm gathers above the fated lovers is in the manner of Homer, and of such Homeric Northern sagas as the "Njala." Probably Scott had no thought of these in his mind, nor any idea of imitating them. But his genius was akin to that of the early world, and though he never let superstition stand in his way, as he said when at Rome, he was capable of feeling and communicating the superstitious thrill, that unreasonable, natural emotion which we inherit from the older world. Just as, in the Odyssey, all omens point to one end, from the prophecy of Mentor to the vision of the second-sighted man, and the portentous word uttered by the woman grinding at the mill, so it is also in "The Bride of Lammermoor." Lucy first draws breath after her swoon on the unhappy spot which is fatal to the Ravenswoods, beside the haunted well. The raven, the sacred bird of the race, is slain at Edgar's feet by Henry Ashton. Old Alice, when the lovers visit her, utters the foreboding prayer "God help them both!" Ravenswood, when driven from his paternal home by

Lady Ashton, meets these weird women, Annie Winnie and Ailsie Gourlay, and awakes the Sibyl's prophecy that "dead-deal will never be laid on his back, make your market o' that, for I hae it frae a sure hand." He has already seen the wraith of the blind old Alice, a phantasm beheld at the moment of her death, when, as a considerable body of evidence suggests, the living are occasionally impressed as it were with the presence of the dying. These appearances we may explain as we will, they may be mere coincident hallucinations, but few who have beheld them care to repeat the experience. Of all Scott's many dealings with the supernatural, this is perhaps the most impressive. It does not strain belief, for, by whatever law of association or fancy or the like these sensations are felt, felt they assuredly are. Nor is the vision made too explicit, nor the wraith too purposeful. "The singularity of her dress, which rather resembled a shroud than the garment of a living woman, the appearance of her person, larger, as it struck him, than it usually seemed to be, above all the strange circumstance of a blind, infirm, and decrepit person being found alone and at a distance from her habitation, combined to impress him with wonder and fear." "Strange thoughts and confused apprehensions" such an experience may well awaken, especially when, as in this case, by a happy touch, Ravenswood finds his horse "sweating and terrified," like Scott's own Fenella when he met the unexplained appearance on the moor near Ashiestiel. Then comes the saying of the Sibyl, as Lucy, with her death-cold hand, rides to her bridal. "I tell ye her winding sheet is up as high as her throat already, believe it wha list. Her sand has but few grains to rin out, and nae wonder — they've been weel shaken." Finally we reach Caleb's harping on the "auld sang" with which all ends —

When the last Laird of Ravenswood to Ravenswood shall ride,
And woo a dead maiden to be his bride,
He shall stable his steed in the Kelpie's flow,
And his name shall be lost for evermoe.

Of all Scott's contributions to demonology, these figures of the hags, embittered by black poverty, old age, and neglect, and clinging to that one shred of power in the world which superstition gave them, is the most powerful and the most interpretative. From a thousand trials for witchcraft he has expressed the essence, and, considering his witches, we hold the secret of their mystery. Joanna Baillie writes to him: "Though I do not wish to dwell on this subject, there is one scene between the old hags, as they are preparing to straught the corpse, which struck me as fearfully natural and original. I would pray Mr. Cleishbotham to give me a tale to be called 'The Witch.' . . . I can see, in the scene just mentioned, a metaphysical view of the subject, glimmering through the infernal dialogue of the hags, their own malevolence and envy connecting them in their own imaginations with the Devil." On this ground we may not dare to say that Scott has vanquished Shakspeare, but he has equalled him. The Witches of Macbeth are witches of poetry; those of Scott are "realistic," as it were. Such were the witches historically and in fact, children of social wrongs, children of darkness.

No characters in "The Bride of Lammermoor" can well be called "minor," for, except the caricatured form of old Caleb, all live and are true. From the Marquis of A.,[1] the cautious intriguer in high places, to Craigengelt, that copper captain for whose maintenance the good nature of Scott so characteristically provides, all live and move. The old sexton whom the Marquis

[1] It has been suggested that Athol is meant. He writes from "B."—that is, Blair. Much learning is bestowed on these identifications in Chambers's "Illustrations of the Author of Waverley."

meets in the graveyard is a little masterpiece. His account of the battle of Bothwell Bridge is a wonderfully veracious picture, from the point of view of the ordinary man, no hero, with his heart engaged neither for Covenanter nor Cavalier. The boy, Henry Ashton, is one of Scott's curiously rare portraits of boys. Why did he draw them so seldom? The natural selfishness of youth, the love of sport, the affection, the disposition to tease, are drawn with the hand of a master who, like Shakspeare, did not often use his hand to delineate the humours of boyhood. We may not hold, with Lady Louisa Stuart, that the Master "is the best of Scott's lovers," for Roland Græme, yet unborn when Lady Louisa wrote, probably holds that place. The world, according to Mr. Ruskin, "has foolishly praised the horrors of Ravenswood;" he blames the novel for "prevailing melancholy and fantastic improbability." Granting the omens as characteristic of the age, it is not plain where the improbability of this "ower true tale" is to be discovered, nor, granting the historical topic, is the melancholy overcharged. This immortal tragedy is the work, according to a criticism in itself sufficiently fantastic, of a man "blinded and stultified by sickness," blinded and stultified, too, when he conceived and drew Dugald Dalgetty! But it is idle to dwell on such an objection, which, as Joanna Baillie remarked about the hags, is "frightfully original."

Contemporary criticism said little about "The Bride of Lammermoor" which is not obvious. The "Edinburgh Review" observed: "'The Bride of Lammermoor' is more sketchy and romantic than the usual vein of the author, and loses, perhaps, in the exaggeration that is incident to that style, some of the deep and heartfelt interest that belongs to more familiar situations. The humours of Caleb Balderstone are to our taste the least successful of this author's attempts at pleasantry, and

belong rather to the school of French or Italian buffoonery than to that of English humour; and yet, to give scope to these farcical exhibitions, the poverty of the Master of Ravenswood is exaggerated beyond all credibility, and to the injury even of his personal dignity. Sir W. Ashton is tedious, and Bucklaw and his captain, though excellently drawn, take up rather too much room for subordinate agents. There are splendid things, however, in this work also. The picture of old Ailie is exquisite — and beyond the reach of any other living writer. The hags that converse in the churchyard have all the terror and sublimity and more than the nature of Macbeth's witches; and the courtship at the Mermaiden's Well, as well as some of the immediately preceding scenes, are full of dignity and beauty: the catastrophe of the Bride, though it may be founded on fact, is too horrible for fiction. But that of Ravenswood is magnificent, and, taken along with the prediction which it was doomed to fulfil, and the mourning and death of Balderstone, is one of the finest combinations of superstition and sadness which the gloomy genius of our fiction has ever put together."

"Blackwood" said: "But of all the novels of our author there is no one which has a catastrophe so complete and which shakes the mind so strongly as that of 'The Bride of Lammermoor.' It is the only true romance of the whole set, in purpose, tenor, and conclusion it is a pure and magnificent tragical romance. From beginning to end the interest is fixed intensely upon the fortunes of two individuals, on whom, although they are often surrounded by ludicrous characters and ludicrous incidents, and although the narrative that develops their fate be often written in a tone that at first sight might appear rather too merry, when viewed in relation to the final issue, there hangs all along a deep and pensive shadow which separates them from all that is about

them, and marks them out as the chosen and vindicated victims of a terrible destiny. . . . From the moment that Lady Ashton appears, the interest of the piece hurries on from one tragic scene to another, with a rapidity and power which we do not think have been equalled in any of the predecessors of this novel. She seems, by the first glance of her eye, to wither the whole resolution of her husband. . . . The use of Scottish superstitions in this tale is indeed managed with very singular skill, and in a way, too, of which no example had hitherto been afforded by the author. . . . There is, perhaps, more poetry, and that of the finest kind, in the last two or three scenes of this novel, than any similar number of pages, written by this author, ever contained. . . . The chief source of the comic interest in the piece is the character of Caleb Balderstone. . . . It is probable that the generality of readers will think Caleb's inventions are too much dwelt upon, and that the joke is pursued till its interest is exhausted."

The critique of the "Quarterly Review" ran thus: "It is a tragedy of the highest order. . . . Although there is no deficiency of faults in Ravenswood, it is perhaps a blemish that his faults are so remotely connected with his misfortunes. They set in motion, it is true, the train of causes on which his misery and his death ultimately depend. . . . As a character he is excellent, admirably drawn and admirably grouped and contrasted with those around him. . . . The engagement between the lovers is beautifully managed. . . . The three hags are a bold, we had almost said a not unequal, rivalry of the Weird Sisters. Their professional praise of Ravenswood is whimsically horrible. . . . We wish Ailsie Gourlay's prediction had been omitted. . . . But Caleb is a more serious blemish. Of all our author's fools and bores, and we acknowledge we dislike the whole race of them, from Monkbarns down to the Euphuist,

he is the most pertinacious, the most intrusive, and, from the nature of his one monotonous note, the least pardonable in his intrusion. His silly buffoonery is always marring, with gross absurdities and degrading associations, some scene of tenderness or dignity. . . . We must not quit 'The Bride of Lammermoor' without remarking its deviation from the usual management of a narrative. The fatal nature of the catastrophe is vaguely indicated in the very beginning; at every rest in the story it is more and more pointedly designated; and long before the conclusion we are aware of the place and means of its accomplishment."

ANDREW LANG.

INTRODUCTION

TO

THE BRIDE OF LAMMERMOOR.

THE author, on a former occasion,[1] declined giving the real source from which he drew the tragic subject of this history, because, though occurring at a distant period, it might possibly be unpleasing to the feelings of the descendants of the parties. But as he finds an account of the circumstances given in the Notes to Law's Memorials,[2] (*a*)[3] by his ingenious friend Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, Esq., and also indicated in his reprint of the Rev. Mr. Symson's poems, appended to the Description of Galloway, as the original of the Bride of Lammermoor, the author feels himself now at liberty to tell the tale as he had it from connexions of his own, who lived very near the period, and were closely related to the family of the Bride.

It is well known that the family of Dalrymple, which has produced, within the space of two centuries, as many men of talent, civil and military, and of literary, political, and professional eminence, as any house in Scotland, first rose into distinction in the person of James

[1] See Introduction to the Chronicles of the Canongate.

[2] Law's Memorials, 4to, 1818, p. 226.

[3] See Editor's Notes at the end of the Volume. Wherever a similar reference occurs, the reader will understand that the same direction applies.

Dalrymple, one of the most eminent lawyers that ever lived, though the labours of his powerful mind were unhappily exercised on a subject so limited as Scottish Jurisprudence, on which he has composed an admirable work.

He married Margaret, daughter to Ross of Balniel, with whom he obtained a considerable estate. She was an able, politic, and high-minded woman, so successful in what she undertook, that the vulgar, no way partial to her husband or her family, imputed her success to necromancy. According to the popular belief, this Dame Margaret purchased the temporal prosperity of her family from the Master whom she served, under a singular condition, which is thus narrated by the historian of her grandson, the great Earl of Stair. "She lived to a great age, and at her death desired that she might not be put under ground, but that her coffin should be placed upright on one end of it, promising, that while she remained in that situation, the Dalrymples should continue in prosperity. What was the old lady's motive for such a request, or whether she really made such a promise, I cannot take upon me to determine; but it is certain her coffin stands upright in the aisle of the church of Kirkliston, the burial place of the family."[1] The talents of this accomplished race were sufficient to have accounted for the dignities which many members of the family attained, without any supernatural assistance. But their extraordinary prosperity was attended by some equally singular family misfortunes, of which that which befell their eldest daughter was at once unaccountable and melancholy.

Miss Janet Dalrymple, daughter of the first Lord Stair, and Dame Margaret Ross, had engaged herself without the knowledge of her parents to the Lord

[1] Memoirs of John Earl of Stair, by an Impartial Hand. London, printed for C. Cobbet, p. 7.

Rutherford, who was not acceptable to them either on account of his political principles, or his want of fortune. The young couple broke a piece of gold together, and pledged their troth in the most solemn manner; and it is said the young lady imprecated dreadful evils on herself should she break her plighted faith. Shortly after, a suitor who was favoured by Lord Stair, and still more so by his lady, paid his addresses to Miss Dalrymple. The young lady refused the proposal, and being pressed on the subject, confessed her secret engagement. Lady Stair, a woman accustomed to universal submission, (for even her husband did not dare to contradict her,) treated this objection as a trifle, and insisted upon her daughter yielding her consent to marry the new suitor, David Dunbar, son and heir to David Dunbar of Baldoon, in Wigtonshire. The first lover, a man of very high spirit, then interfered by letter, and insisted on the right he had acquired by his troth plighted with the young lady. Lady Stair sent him for answer, that her daughter, sensible of her undutiful behaviour in entering into a contract unsanctioned by her parents, had retracted her unlawful vow, and now refused to fulfil her engagement with him.

The lover, in return, declined positively to receive such an answer from any one but his mistress in person; and as she had to deal with a man who was both of a most determined character, and of too high condition to be trifled with, Lady Stair was obliged to consent to an interview between Lord Rutherford and her daughter. But she took care to be present in person, and argued the point with the disappointed and incensed lover with pertinacity equal to his own. She particularly insisted on the Levitical law, which declares, that a woman shall be free of a vow which her parents dissent from. This is the passage of Scripture she founded on:—

"If a man vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.

"If a woman also vow a vow unto the Lord, and bind herself by a bond, being in her father's house in her youth;

"And her father hear her vow, and her bond wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her father shall hold his peace at her: then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand.

"But if her father disallow her in the day that he heareth; not any of her vows, or of her bonds wherewith she hath bound her soul, shall stand: and the Lord shall forgive her, because her father disallowed her."[1]

While the mother insisted on these topics, the lover in vain conjured the daughter to declare her own opinion and feelings. She remained totally overwhelmed, as it seemed,—mute, pale, and motionless as a statue. Only at her mother's command, sternly uttered, she summoned strength enough to restore to her plighted suitor the piece of broken gold, which was the emblem of her troth. On this he burst forth into a tremendous passion, took leave of the mother with maledictions, and as he left the apartment, turned back to say to his weak, if not fickle mistress, "For you, madam, you will be a world's wonder;" a phrase by which some remarkable degree of calamity is usually implied. He went abroad, and returned not again. If the last Lord Rutherford was the unfortunate party, he must have been the third who bore that title, and who died in 1685.

The marriage betwixt Janet Dalrymple and David Dunbar of Baldoon now went forward, the bride showing no repugnance, but being absolutely passive in every thing her mother commanded or advised. On the day of the marriage, which, as was then usual, was celebrated by a great assemblage of friends and relations, she was the same—sad, silent, and resigned, as

[1] Numbers, xxx. 2. 3, 4, 5.

it seemed, to her destiny. A lady, very nearly connected with the family, told the author that she had conversed on the subject with one of the brothers of the bride, a mere lad at the time, who had ridden before his sister to church. He said her hand, which lay on his as she held her arm round his waist, was as cold and damp as marble. But, full of his new dress, and the part he acted in the procession, the circumstance, which he long afterwards remembered with bitter sorrow and compunction, made no impression on him at the time.

The bridal feast was followed by dancing; the bride and bridegroom retired as usual, when of a sudden the most wild and piercing cries were heard from the nuptial chamber. It was then the custom, to prevent any coarse pleasantry which old times perhaps admitted, that the key of the nuptial chamber should be intrusted to the brideman. He was called upon, but refused at first to give it up, till the shrieks became so hideous that he was compelled to hasten with others to learn the cause. On opening the door, they found the bridegroom lying across the threshold, dreadfully wounded, and streaming with blood. The bride was then sought for: She was found in the corner of the large chimney, having no covering save her shift, and that dabbled in gore. There she sat grinning at them, mopping and mowing, as I heard the expression used; in a word, absolutely insane. The only words she spoke were, "Tak up your bonny bridegroom." She survived this horrible scene little more than a fortnight, having been married on the 24th of August, and dying on the 12th of September 1669.

The unfortunate Baldoon recovered from his wounds, but sternly prohibited all enquiries respecting the manner in which he had received them. If a lady, he said, asked him any question upon the subject, he would neither answer her nor speak to her again while he

lived; if a gentleman, he would consider it as a mortal affront, and demand satisfaction as having received such. He did not very long survive the dreadful catastrophe, having met with a fatal injury by a fall from his horse, as he rode between Leith and Holyrood-house, of which he died the next day, 28th March 1682. Thus a few years removed all the principal actors in this frightful tragedy.

Various reports went abroad on this mysterious affair, many of them very inaccurate, though they could hardly be said to be exaggerated. It was difficult at that time to become acquainted with the history of a Scottish family above the lower rank; and strange things sometimes took place there, into which even the law did not scrupulously enquire.

The credulous Mr. Law says, generally, that the Lord President Stair had a daughter, who "being married, the night she was *bride in*, [that is, bedded bride,] was taken from her bridegroom and *harled* [dragged] through the house, (by spirits, we are given to understand,) and soon afterwards died. Another daughter," he says, "was possessed by an evil spirit."

My friend, Mr. Sharpe, gives another edition of the tale. According to his information, it was the bridegroom who wounded the bride. The marriage, according to this account, had been against her mother's inclination, who had given her consent in these ominous words: "You may marry him, but soon shall you repent it."

I find still another account darkly insinuated in some highly scurrilous and abusive verses, of which I have an original copy. They are docketed as being written "Upon the late Viscount Stair and his family, by Sir William Hamilton of Whitelaw. The marginals by William Dunlop, writer in Edinburgh, a son

of the Laird of Househill, and nephew to the said Sir William Hamilton." There was a bitter and personal quarrel and rivalry betwixt the author of this libel, a name which it richly deserves, and Lord President Stair; and the lampoon, which is written with much more malice than art, bears the following motto: —

"Stair's neck, mind, wife, sons, grandson, and the rest,
Are wry, false, witch, pests, parricide, possessed."

This malignant satirist, who calls up all the misfortunes of the family, does not forget the fatal bridal of Baldoon. He seems, though his verses are as obscure as unpoetical, to intimate, that the violence done to the bridegroom was by the intervention of the foul fiend to whom the young lady had resigned herself, in case she should break her contract with her first lover. His hypothesis is inconsistent with the account given in the note upon Law's Memorials, but easily reconcilable to the family tradition.

"In al Stair's offspring we no difference know,
They doe the females as the males bestow;
So he of's daughter's marriage gave the ward,
Like a true vassal, to Glenluce's Laird;
He knew what she did to her suitor plight,
If she her faith to Rutherfurd should slight,
Which, like his own, for greed he broke outright.
Nick did Baldoon's posterior right deride,
And, as first substitute, did seize the bride;
Whate'er he to his mistress did or said,
He threw the bridegroom from the nuptial bed,
Into the chimney did so his rival maul,
His bruised bones ne'er were cured but by the fall."[1]

One of the marginal notes ascribed to William Dunlop, applies to the above lines. "She had betrothed herself to Lord Rutherfoord under horrid im-

[1] The fall from his horse, by which he was killed.

precations, and afterwards married Baldoon, his nevoy, and her mother was the cause of her breach of faith."

The same tragedy is alluded to in the following couplet and note: —

> "What train of curses that base brood pursues,
> When the young nephew weds old uncle's spouse."

The note on the word *uncle* explains it as meaning "Rutherfoord, who should have married the Lady Baldoon, was Baldoon's uncle." The poetry of this satire on Lord Stair and his family was, as already noticed, written by Sir William Hamilton of Whitelaw, a rival of Lord Stair for the situation of President of the Court of Session; a person much inferior to that great lawyer in talents, and equally ill-treated by the calumny or just satire of his contemporaries, as an unjust and partial judge. Some of the notes are by that curious and laborious antiquary Robert Milne, who, as a virulent Jacobite, willingly lent a hand to blacken the family of Stair.[1]

Another poet of the period, with a very different purpose, has left an elegy, in which he darkly hints at and bemoans the fate of the ill-starred young person, whose very uncommon calamity Whitelaw, Dunlop, and Milne, thought a fitting subject for buffoonery and ribaldry. This bard of milder mood was Andrew Symson, before the Revolution minister of Kirkinner, in Galloway, and after his expulsion as an Episcopalian, following the humble occupation of a printer in Edinburgh. He furnished the family of Baldoon, with

[1] I have compared the satire, which occurs in the first volume of the curious little collection called a Book of Scottish Pasquils, 1827, with that which has a more full text, and more extended notes, and which is in my own possession, by gift of Thomas Thomson, Esq. Register-Depute. In the second Book of Pasquils, p. 72, is a most abusive epitaph on Sir James Hamilton of Whitelaw.

which he appears to have been intimate, with an elegy on the tragic event in their family. In this piece he treats the mournful occasion of the bride's death with mysterious solemnity.

The verses bear this title, "On the unexpected death of the virtuous Lady Mrs. Janet Dalrymple, Lady Baldoon, younger," and afford us the precise dates of the catastrophe, which could not otherwise have been easily ascertained. "Nupta August 12. Domum Ducta August 24. Obiit September 12. Sepult. September 30, 1669." The form of the elegy is a dialogue betwixt a passenger and a domestic servant. The first, recollecting that he had passed that way lately, and seen all around enlivened by the appearances of mirth and festivity, is desirous to know what had changed so gay a scene into mourning. We preserve the reply of the servant as a specimen of Mr. Symson's verses, which are not of the first quality:—

——— "Sir, 'tis truth you've told,
We did enjoy great mirth; but now, ah me!
Our joyful song's turn'd to an elegie.
A virtuous lady, not long since a bride,
Was to a hopeful plant by marriage tied,
And brought home hither. We did all rejoice,
Even for her sake. But presently our voice
Was turn'd to mourning for that little time
That she'd enjoy: She waned in her prime,
For Atropos, with her impartial knife,
Soon cut her thread, and therewithal her life;
And for the time we may it well remember,
It being in unfortunate September;
Where we must leave her till the resurrection,
'Tis then the Saints enjoy their full perfection."[1]

[1] This elegy is reprinted in the appendix to a topographical work by the same author, entitled "A Large Description of Galloway, by Andrew Symson, Minister of Kirkinner," 8vo, Taits, Edinburgh, 1823. The reverend gentleman's elegies are extremely rare, nor did the author ever see a copy but his own,

Mr. Symson also poured forth his elegiac strains upon the fate of the widowed bridegroom, on which subject, after a long and querulous effusion, the poet arrives at the sound conclusion, that if Baldoon had walked on foot, which it seems was his general custom, he would have escaped perishing by a fall from horseback. As the work in which it occurs is so scarce as almost to be unique, and as it gives us the most full account of one of the actors in this tragic tale which we have rehearsed, we will, at the risk of being tedious, insert some short specimens of Mr. Symson's composition. It is entitled, —

"A Funeral Elegie, occasioned by the sad and much lamented death of that worthily respected, and very much accomplished gentleman, David Dunbar, younger of Baldoon, only son and apparent heir to the right worshipful Sir David Dunbar of Baldoon, Knight Baronet. He departed this life on March 28, 1682, having received a bruise by a fall, as he was riding the day preceding betwixt Leith and Holy-Rood-House; and was honourably interred in the Abbey church of Holy-Rood-House, on April 4, 1682."

"Men might, and very justly too, conclude
Me guilty of the worst ingratitude,
Should I be silent, or should I forbear
At this sad accident to shed a tear;
A tear! said I? ah! that's a petit thing,
A very lean, slight, slender offering,
Too mean, I'me sure, for me, wherewith t'attend
The unexpected funeral of my friend —
A glass of briny tears charged up to th' brim,
Would be too few for me to shed for him."

The poet proceeds to state his intimacy with the deceased, and the constancy of the young man's attendance on public worship, which was regular, and had such effect upon two or three others that were influenced by his example,

which is bound up with the Tripatriarchicon, a religious poem from the Biblical History, by the same author.

"So that my Muse 'gainst Priscian avers,
He, only he, *were* my parishioners;
Yea, and my only hearers."

He then describes the deceased in person and manners, from which it appears that more accomplishments were expected in the composition of a fine gentleman in ancient than modern times:

"His body, though not very large or tall,
Was sprightly, active, yea and strong withal.
His constitution was, if right I've guess'd,
Blood mixt with choler, said to be the best.
In's gesture, converse, speech, discourse, attire,
He practis'd that which wise men still admire,
Commend, and recommend. What's that? you'l say;
'Tis this: He ever choos'd the middle way
'Twixt both th' extremes. Amost in ev'ry thing
He did the like, 'tis worth our noticing:
Sparing, yet not a niggard; liberal,
And yet not lavish or a prodigal,
As knowing when to spend and when to spare;
And that's a lesson which not many are
Acquainted with. He bashful was, yet daring
When he saw cause, and yet therein but sparing;
Familiar, yet not common, for he knew
To condescend, and keep his distance too.
He us'd, and that most commonly, to go
On foot; I wish that he had still done so.
Th' affairs of court were unto him well known:
And yet mean while he slighted not his own.
He knew full well how to behave at court,
And yet but seldome did thereto resort;
But lov'd the country life, choos'd to inure
Himself to past'rage and agriculture;
Proving, improving, ditching, trenching, draining,
Viewing, reviewing, and by those means gaining;
Planting, transplanting, levelling, erecting
Walls, chambers, houses, terraces; projecting
Now this, now that device, this draught, that measure,
That might advance his profit with his pleasure.
Quick in his bargains, honest in commerce,
Just in his dealings, being much averse

From quirks of law, still ready to refer
His cause t'an honest country arbiter.
He was acquainted with cosmography,
Arithmetic, and modern history;
With architecture and such arts as these,
Which I may call specifick sciences
Fit for a gentleman; and surely he
That knows them not, at least in some degree,
May brook the title, but he wants the thing,
Is but a shadow scarce worth noticing.
He learned the French, be't spoken to his praise,
In very little more than fourty days."

Then comes the full burst of woe, in which, instead of saying much himself, the poet informs us what the ancients would have said on such an occasion:

"A heathen poet, at the news, no doubt,
Would have exclaimed, and furiously cry'd out
Against the fates, the destinies and starrs,
What! this the effect of planetarie warrs!
We might have seen him rage and rave, yea worse,
'Tis very like we might have heard him curse
The year, the month, the day, the hour, the place,
The company, the wager, and the race;
Decry all recreations, with the names
Of Isthmian, Pythian, and Olympick games;
Exclaim against them all both old and new,
Both the Nemæan and the Lethæan too:
Adjudge all persons under highest pain,
Always to walk on foot, and then again
Order all horses to be hough'd, that we
Might never more the like adventure see."

Supposing our readers have had enough of Mr. Symson's verses, and finding nothing more in his poem worthy of transcription, we return to the tragic story.

It is needless to point out to the intelligent reader, that the witchcraft of the mother consisted only in the ascendency of a powerful mind over a weak and melancholy one, and that the harshness with which she exercised her superiority in a case of delicacy, had driven

her daughter first to despair, then to frenzy. Accordingly, the author has endeavoured to explain the tragic tale on this principle. Whatever resemblance Lady Ashton may be supposed to possess to the celebrated Dame Margaret Ross, the reader must not suppose that there was any idea of tracing the portrait of the first Lord Viscount Stair in the tricky and mean-spirited Sir William Ashton. Lord Stair, whatever might be his moral qualities, was certainly one of the first statesmen and lawyers of his age.

The imaginary castle of Wolf's Crag has been identified by some lover of locality with that of Fast Castle. The author is not competent to judge of the resemblance betwixt the real and imaginary scene, having never seen Fast Castle except from the sea. But fortalices of this description are found occupying, like ospreys' nests, projecting rocks, or promontories, in many parts of the eastern coast of Scotland, and the position of Fast Castle seems certainly to resemble that of Wolf's Crag as much as any other, while its vicinity to the mountain ridge of Lammermoor, renders the assimilation a probable one.

We have only to add, that the death of the unfortunate bridegroom by a fall from horseback, has been in the novel transferred to the no less unfortunate lover.

THE

BRIDE OF LAMMERMOOR.

CHAPTER I.

By cauk and keel to win your bread,
Wi' whigmaleeries for them wha need,
Whilk is a gentle trade indeed
To carry the gaberlunzie on.

Old Song.

FEW have been in my secret while I was compiling these narratives, nor is it probable that they will ever become public during the life of their author. Even were that event to happen, I am not ambitious of the honoured distinction, *digito monstrarier.* I confess, that, were it safe to cherish such dreams at all, I should more enjoy the thought of remaining behind the curtain unseen, like the ingenious manager of Punch and his wife Joan, (*b*) and enjoying the astonishment and conjectures of my audience. Then might I, perchance, hear the productions of the obscure Peter Pattieson praised by the judicious, and admired by the feeling, engrossing the young, and attracting even the old; while the critic traced their fame up to some name of literary celebrity, and the question when, and by whom, these tales were written, filled up the pause of conversation in a hundred circles and coteries. This I may never

enjoy during my lifetime; but farther than this, I am certain, my vanity should never induce me to aspire.

I am too stubborn in habits, and too little polished in manners, to envy or aspire to the honours assigned to my literary contemporaries. I could not think a whit more highly of myself, were I even found worthy to "come in place as a lion," for a winter in the great metropolis. I could not rise, turn round, and show all my honours, from the shaggy mane to the tufted tail, roar you an 'twere any nightingale, and so lie down again like a well-behaved beast of show, and all at the cheap and easy rate of a cup of coffee, and a slice of bread and butter as thin as a wafer. And I could ill stomach the fulsome flattery with which the lady of the evening indulges her show-monsters on such occasions, as she crams her parrots with sugar-plums, in order to make them talk before company. I cannot be tempted to "come aloft" for these marks of distinction, and, like imprisoned Sampson, I would rather remain — if such must be the alternative — all my life in the mill-house, grinding for my very bread, than be brought forth to make sport for the Philistine lords and ladies. This proceeds from no dislike, real or affected, to the aristocracy of these realms. But they have their place, and I have mine; and, like the iron and earthen vessels in the old fable, we can scarce come into collision without my being the sufferer in every sense. It may be otherwise with the sheets which I am now writing. These may be opened and laid aside at pleasure; by amusing themselves with the perusal, the great will excite no false hopes; by neglecting or condemning them, they will inflict no pain; and how seldom can

they converse with those whose minds have toiled for their delight, without doing either the one or the other.

In the better and wiser tone of feeling, which Ovid only expresses in one line to retract in that which follows, I can address these quires —

Parve, nec invideo, sine me, liber, ibis in urbem.

Nor do I join the regret of the illustrious exile, that he himself could not in person accompany the volume, which he sent forth to the mart of literature, pleasure, and luxury. Were there not a hundred similar instances on record, the fate of my poor friend and school-fellow, Dick Tinto, would be sufficient to warn me against seeking happiness, in the celebrity which attaches itself to a successful cultivator of the fine arts.

Dick Tinto, when he wrote himself artist, was wont to derive his origin from the ancient family of Tinto, of that ilk, in Lanarkshire, and occasionally hinted that he had somewhat derogated from his gentle blood, in using the pencil for his principal means of support. But if Dick's pedigree was correct, some of his ancestors must have suffered a more heavy declension, since the good man his father executed the necessary, and, I trust, the honest, but certainly not very distinguished employment, of tailor in ordinary to the village of Langdirdum in the west. Under his humble roof was Richard born, and to his father's humble trade was Richard, greatly contrary to his inclination, early indentured. Old Mr. Tinto had, however, no reason to congratulate himself upon having compelled the youthful genius of his son to forsake its natural bent. He fared like the schoolboy, who attempts to stop with his finger

the spout of a water cistern, while the stream, exasperated at this compression, escapes by a thousand uncalculated spirts, and wets him all over for his pains. Even so fared the senior Tinto, when his hopeful apprentice not only exhausted all the chalk in making sketches upon the shopboard, but even executed several caricatures of his father's best customers, who began loudly to murmur, that it was too hard to have their persons deformed by the vestments of the father, and to be at the same time turned into ridicule by the pencil of the son. This led to discredit and loss of practice, until the old tailor, yielding to destiny, and to the entreaties of his son, permitted him to attempt his fortune in a line for which he was better qualified.

There was about this time, in the village of Langdirdum, a peripatetic brother of the brush, who exercised his vocation *sub Jove frigido*, the object of admiration to all the boys of the village, but especially to Dick Tinto. The age had not yet adopted, amongst other unworthy retrenchments, that illiberal measure of economy, which, supplying by written characters the lack of symbolical representation, closes one open and easily accessible avenue of instruction and emolument against the students of the fine arts. It was not yet permitted to write upon the plastered door-way of an alehouse, or the suspended sign of an inn, "The Old Magpie," or "The Saracen's Head," substituting that cold description for the lively effigies of the plumed chatterer, or the turban'd frown of the terrific soldan. That early and more simple age considered alike the necessities of all ranks, and depicted the symbols of good cheer so as to be obvious to all capacities; well judging, that a man, who could not read a syllable, might never-

theless love a pot of good ale as well as his better-educated neighbours, or even as the parson himself. Acting upon this liberal principle, publicans as yet hung forth the painted emblems of their calling, and sign-painters, if they seldom feasted, did not at least absolutely starve.

To a worthy of this decayed profession, as we have already intimated, Dick Tinto became an assistant; and thus, as is not unusual among heaven-born geniuses in this department of the fine arts, began to paint before he had any notion of drawing.

His talent for observing nature soon induced him to rectify the errors, and soar above the instructions, of his teacher. He particularly shone in painting horses, that being a favourite sign in the Scottish villages; and, in tracing his progress, it is beautiful to observe, how by degrees he learned to shorten the backs, and prolong the legs, of these noble animals, until they came to look less like crocodiles, and more like nags. Detraction, which always pursues merit with strides proportioned to its advancement, has indeed alleged, that Dick once upon a time painted a horse with five legs, instead of four. I might have rested his defence upon the license allowed to that branch of his profession, which, as it permits all sorts of singular and irregular combinations, may be allowed to extend itself so far as to bestow a limb supernumerary on a favourite subject. But the cause of a deceased friend is sacred; and I disdain to bottom it so superficially. I have visited the sign in question, which yet swings exalted in the village of Langdirdum; and I am ready to depone upon oath, that what has been idly mistaken or misrepresented as

being the fifth leg of the horse, is, in fact, the tail of that quadruped, and, considered with reference to the posture in which he is delineated, forms a circumstance, introduced and managed with great and successful, though daring art. The nag being represented in a rampant or rearing posture, the tail, which is prolonged till it touches the ground, appears to form a *point d'appui*, and gives the firmness of a tripod to the figure, without which it would be difficult to conceive, placed as the feet are, how the courser could maintain his ground without tumbling backwards. This bold conception has fortunately fallen into the custody of one by whom it is duly valued; for, when Dick, in his more advanced state of proficiency, became dubious of the propriety of so daring a deviation from the established rules of art, and was desirous to execute a picture of the publican himself in exchange for this juvenile production, the courteous offer was declined by his judicious employer, who had observed, it seems, that when his ale failed to do its duty in conciliating his guests, one glance at his sign was sure to put them in good humour.

It would be foreign to my present purpose to trace the steps by which Dick Tinto improved his touch, and corrected, by the rules of art, the luxuriance of a fervid imagination. The scales fell from his eyes on viewing the sketches of a contemporary, the Scottish Teniers, as Wilkie has been deservedly styled. He threw down the brush, took up the crayons, and, amid hunger and toil, and suspense and uncertainty, pursued the path of his profession under better auspices than those of his original master. Still the first rude emanations of

his genius (like the nursery rhymes of Pope, could these be recovered) will be dear to the companions of Dick Tinto's youth. There is a tankard and gridiron painted over the door of an obscure change-house in the Back-wynd of Gandercleugh — But I feel I must tear myself from the subject, or dwell on it too long.

Amid his wants and struggles, Dick Tinto had recourse, like his brethren, to levying that tax upon the vanity of mankind which he could not extract from their taste and liberality — in a word, he painted portraits. It was in this more advanced state of proficiency, when Dick had soared above his original line of business, and highly disdained any allusion to it, that, after having been estranged for several years, we again met in the village of Gandercleugh, I holding my present situation, and Dick painting copies of the human face divine at a guinea per head. This was a small premium, yet, in the first burst of business, it more than sufficed for all Dick's moderate wants; so that he occupied an apartment at the Wallace Inn, cracked his jest with impunity even upon mine host himself, and lived in respect and observance with the chamber-maid, hostler, and waiter.

Those halcyon days were too serene to last long. When his honour the Laird of Gandercleugh, with his wife and three daughters, the minister, the gauger, mine esteemed patron Mr. Jedediah Cleishbotham, and some round dozen of the feuars and farmers, had been consigned to immortality by Tinto's brush, custom began to slacken, and it was impossible to wring more than crowns and half-crowns from the hard hands of the peasants, whose ambition led them to Dick's painting-room.

Still, though the horizon was overclouded, no storm for some time ensued. Mine host had Christian faith with a lodger, who had been a good paymaster as long as he had the means. And from a portrait of our landlord himself, grouped with his wife and daughters, in the style of Rubens, which suddenly appeared in the best parlour, it was evident that Dick had found some mode of bartering art for the necessaries of life.

Nothing, however, is more precarious than resources of this nature. It was observed, that Dick became in his turn the whetstone of mine host's wit, without venturing either at defence or retaliation; that his easel was transferred to a garret-room, in which there was scarce space for it to stand upright; and that he no longer ventured to join the weekly club, of which he had been once the life and soul. In short, Dick Tinto's friends feared that he had acted like the animal called the sloth, which, having eaten up the last green leaf upon the tree where it has established itself, ends by tumbling down from the top, and dying of inanition. I ventured to hint this to Dick, recommended his transferring the exercise of his inestimable talent to some other sphere, and forsaking the common which he might be said to have eaten bare.

"There is an obstacle to my change of residence," said my friend, grasping my hand with a look of solemnity.

"A bill due to my landlord, I am afraid?" replied I, with heartfelt sympathy; "if any part of my slender means can assist in this emergence" ——

"No, by the soul of Sir Joshua!" answered the generous youth, "I will never involve a friend in

the consequences of my own misfortune. There is a mode by which I can regain my liberty; and to creep even through a common sewer, is better than to remain in prison."

I did not perfectly understand what my friend meant. The muse of painting appeared to have failed him, and what other goddess he could invoke in his distress, was a mystery to me. We parted, however, without further explanation, and I did not again see him until three days after, when he summoned me to partake of the *foy* with which his landlord proposed to regale him ere his departure for Edinburgh.

I found Dick in high spirits, whistling while he buckled the small knapsack, which contained his colours, brushes, pallets, and clean shirt. That he parted on the best terms with mine host, was obvious from the cold beef set forth in the low parlour, flanked by two mugs of admirable brown stout; and I own my curiosity was excited concerning the means through which the face of my friend's affairs had been so suddenly improved. I did not suspect Dick of dealing with the devil, and by what earthly means he had extricated himself thus happily, I was at a total loss to conjecture.

He perceived my curiosity, and took me by the hand. "My friend," he said, "fain would I conceal, even from you, the degradation to which it has been necessary to submit, in order to accomplish an honourable retreat from Gandercleugh. But what avails attempting to conceal that, which must needs betray itself even by its superior excellence? All the village — all the parish — all the world — will soon discover to what poverty has reduced Richard Tinto."

A sudden thought here struck me — I had observed that our landlord wore, on that memorable morning, a pair of bran new velveteens, instead of his ancient thicksets.

"What," said I, drawing my right hand, with the fore-finger and thumb pressed together, nimbly from my right haunch to my left shoulder, "you have condescended to resume the paternal arts to which you were first bred — long stitches, ha, Dick?"

He repelled this unlucky conjecture with a frown and a pshaw, indicative of indignant contempt, and leading me into another room, showed me, resting against the wall, the majestic head of Sir William Wallace, grim as when severed from the trunk by the orders of the felon Edward.

The painting was executed on boards of a substantial thickness, and the top decorated with irons, for suspending the honoured effigy upon a sign-post.

"There," he said, "my friend, stands the honour of Scotland, and my shame — yet not so — rather the shame of those, who, instead of encouraging art in its proper sphere, reduce it to these unbecoming and unworthy extremities."

I endeavoured to smooth the ruffled feelings of my misused and indignant friend. I reminded him, that he ought not, like the stag in the fable, to despise the quality which had extricated him from difficulties, in which his talents, as a portrait or landscape painter, had been found unavailing. Above all, I praised the execution, as well as conception, of his painting, and reminded him, that far from feeling dishonoured by so superb a specimen of his talents being exposed to the general view of

the public, he ought rather to congratulate himself upon the augmentation of his celebrity, to which its public exhibition must necessarily give rise.

"You are right, my friend — you are right," replied poor Dick, his eye kindling with enthusiasm; "why should I shun the name of an — an" — (he hesitated for a phrase) — "an out-of-doors artist? Hogarth has introduced himself in that character in one of his best engravings — Domenichino, or somebody else, in ancient times — Moreland in our own, have exercised their talents in this manner. And wherefore limit to the rich and higher classes alone the delight which the exhibition of works of art is calculated to inspire into all classes? Statues are placed in the open air, why should Painting be more niggardly in displaying her master-pieces than her sister Sculpture? And yet, my friend, we must part suddenly; the carpenter is coming in an hour to put up the — the emblem; and truly, with all my philosophy, and your consolatory encouragement to boot, I would rather wish to leave Gandercleugh before that operation commences."

We partook of our genial host's parting banquet, and I escorted Dick on his walk to Edinburgh. We parted about a mile from the village, just as we heard the distant cheer of the boys which accompanied the mounting of the new symbol of the Wallace-Head. Dick Tinto mended his pace to get out of hearing — so little had either early practice or recent philosophy reconciled him to the character of a sign-painter.

In Edinburgh, Dick's talents were discovered and appreciated, and he received dinners and hints from several distinguished judges of the fine arts. But these gentlemen dispensed their criticism more

willingly than their cash, and Dick thought he needed cash more than criticism. He therefore sought London, the universal mart of talent, and where, as is usual in general marts of most descriptions, much more of each commodity is exposed to sale than can ever find purchasers.

Dick, who, in serious earnest, was supposed to have considerable natural talents for his profession, and whose vain and sanguine disposition never permitted him to doubt for a moment of ultimate success, threw himself headlong into the crowd which jostled and struggled for notice and preferment. He elbowed others, and was elbowed himself; and finally, by dint of intrepidity, fought his way into some notice, painted for the prize at the Institution, had pictures at the exhibition at Somerset-house, and damned the hanging committee. But poor Dick was doomed to lose the field he fought so gallantly. In the fine arts, there is scarce an alternative betwixt distinguished success and absolute failure; and as Dick's zeal and industry were unable to ensure the first, he fell into the distresses which, in his condition, were the natural consequences of the latter alternative. He was for a time patronised by one or two of those judicious persons who make a virtue of being singular, and of pitching their own opinions against those of the world in matters of taste and criticism. But they soon tired of poor Tinto, and laid him down as a load, upon the principle on which a spoilt child throws away its plaything. Misery, I fear, took him up, and accompanied him to a premature grave, to which he was carried from an obscure lodging in Swallow-street, where he had been dunned by his landlady within doors, and watched by bailiffs with-

out, until death came to his relief. A corner of the Morning Post noticed his death, generously adding, that his manner displayed considerable genius, though his style was rather sketchy; and referred to an advertisement, which announced that Mr. Varnish, a well-known printseller, had still on hand a very few drawings and paintings by Richard Tinto, Esquire, which those of the nobility and gentry, who might wish to complete their collections of modern art, were invited to visit without delay. So ended Dick Tinto! a lamentable proof of the great truth, that in the fine arts mediocrity is not permitted, and that he who cannot ascend to the very top of the ladder, will do well not to put his foot upon it at all.

The memory of Tinto is dear to me, from the recollection of the many conversations which we have had together, most of them turning upon my present task. He was delighted with my progress, and talked of an ornamented and illustrated edition, with heads, vignettes, and *culs de lampe*, all to be designed by his own patriotic and friendly pencil. He prevailed upon an old sergeant of invalids to sit to him in the character of Bothwell, the life-guard's-man of Charles the Second, and the bell-man of Gandercleugh in that of David Deans. But while he thus proposed to unite his own powers with mine for the illustration of these narratives, he mixed many a dose of salutary criticism with the panegyrics which my composition was at times so fortunate as to call forth.

"Your characters," he said, "my dear Pattieson, make too much use of the *gob box;* they *patter* too much — (an elegant phraseology, which Dick had learned while painting the scenes of an itinerant

company of players) — there is nothing in whole pages but mere chat and dialogue."

"The ancient philosopher," said I in reply, "was wont to say, 'Speak, that I may know thee;' and how is it possible for an author to introduce his *personæ dramatis* to his readers in a more interesting and effectual manner, than by the dialogue in which each is represented as supporting his own appropriate character?"

"It is a false conclusion," said Tinto; "I hate it, Peter, as I hate an unfilled cann. I will grant you, indeed, that speech is a faculty of some value in the intercourse of human affairs, and I will not even insist on the doctrine of that Pythagorean toper, who was of opinion, that over a bottle speaking spoiled conversation. But I will not allow that a professor of the fine arts has occasion to embody the idea of his scene in language, in order to impress upon the reader its reality and its effect. On the contrary, I will be judged by most of your readers, Peter, should these tales ever become public, whether you have not given us a page of talk for every single idea which two words might have communicated, while the posture, and manner, and incident, accurately drawn, and brought out by appropriate colouring, would have preserved all that was worthy of preservation, and saved these everlasting said he's and said she's, with which it has been your pleasure to encumber your pages."

I replied, "that he confounded the operations of the pencil and the pen; that the serene and silent art, as painting has been called by one of our first living poets, necessarily appealed to the eye, because it had not the organs for addressing the ear; whereas poetry, or that species of composi-

tion which approached to it, lay under the necessity of doing absolutely the reverse, and addressed itself to the ear, for the purpose of exciting that interest which it could not attain through the medium of the eye."

Dick was not a whit staggered by my argument, which he contended was founded on misrepresentation. "Description," he said, "was to the author of a romance exactly what drawing and tinting were to a painter; words were his colours, and, if properly employed, they could not fail to place the scene, which he wished to conjure up, as effectually before the mind's eye, as the tablet or canvass presents it to the bodily organ. The same rules," he contended, "applied to both, and an exuberance of dialogue, in the former case, was a verbose and laborious mode of composition which went to confound the proper art of fictitious narrative with that of the drama, a widely different species of composition, of which dialogue was the very essence, because all, excepting the language to be made use of, was presented to the eye by the dresses, and persons, and actions of the performers upon the stage. But as nothing," said Dick, "can be more dull than a long narrative written upon the plan of a drama, so where you have approached most near to that species of composition, by indulging in prolonged scenes of mere conversation, the course of your story has become chill and constrained, and you have lost the power of arresting the attention and exciting the imagination, in which upon other occasions you may be considered as having succeeded tolerably well."

I made my bow in requital of the compliment, which was probably thrown in by way of *placebo*,

and expressed myself willing at least to make one trial of a more straight-forward style of composition, in which my actors should do more, and say less, than in my former attempts of this kind. Dick gave me a patronizing and approving nod, and observed, that, finding me so docile, he would communicate, for the benefit of my muse, a subject which he had studied with a view to his own art.

"The story," he said, "was, by tradition, affirmed to be truth, although, as upwards of a hundred years had passed away since the events took place, some doubts upon the accuracy of all the particulars might be reasonably entertained."

When Dick Tinto had thus spoken, he rummaged his portfolio for the sketch from which he proposed one day to execute a picture of fourteen feet by eight. The sketch, which was cleverly executed, to use the appropriate phrase, represented an ancient hall, fitted up and furnished in what we now call the taste of Queen Elizabeth's age. The light, admitted from the upper part of a high casement, fell upon a female figure of exquisite beauty, who, in an attitude of speechless terror, appeared to watch the issue of a debate betwixt two other persons. The one was a young man, in the Vandyke dress common to the time of Charles I., who, with an air of indignant pride, testified by the manner in which he raised his head and extended his arm, seemed to be urging a claim of right, rather than of favour, to a lady, whose age, and some resemblance in their features, pointed her out as the mother of the younger female, and who appeared to listen with a mixture of displeasure and impatience.

Tinto produced his sketch with an air of myste-

rious triumph, and gazed on it as a fond parent looks upon a hopeful child, while he anticipates the future figure he is to make in the world, and the height to which he will raise the honour of his family. He held it at arms' length from me, — he held it closer, — he placed it upon the top of a chest of drawers, closed the lower shutters of the casement, to adjust a downward and favourable light, — fell back to the due distance, dragging me after him, — shaded his face with his hand, as if to exclude all but the favourite object, — and ended by spoiling a child's copy book, which he rolled up so as to serve for the darkened tube of an amateur. I fancy my expressions of enthusiasm had not been in proportion to his own, for he presently exclaimed with vehemence, "Mr. Pattieson, I used to think you had an eye in your head."

I vindicated my claim to the usual allowance of visual organs.

"Yet, on my honour," said Dick, "I would swear you had been born blind, since you have failed at the first glance to discover the subject and meaning of that sketch. I do not mean to praise my own performance, I leave these arts to others; I am sensible of my deficiencies, conscious that my drawing and colouring may be improved by the time I intend to dedicate to the art. But the conception — the expression — the positions — these tell the story to every one who looks at the sketch; and if I can finish the picture without diminution of the original conception, the name of Tinto shall no more be smothered by the mists of envy and intrigue."

I replied, "That I admired the sketch exceedingly; but that to understand its full merit, I felt it absolutely necessary to be informed of the subject."

"That is the very thing I complain of," answered Tinto; "you have accustomed yourself so much to these creeping twilight details of yours, that you are become incapable of receiving that instant and vivid flash of conviction, which darts on the mind from seeing the happy and expressive combinations of a single scene, and which gathers from the position, attitude, and countenance of the moment, not only the history of the past lives of the personages represented, and the nature of the business on which they are immediately engaged, but lifts even the veil of futurity, and affords a shrewd guess at their future fortunes."

"In that case," replied I, "Painting excels the Ape of the renowned Gines de Passamont,(*c*) which only meddled with the past and the present; nay, she excels that very Nature who affords her subjects; for I protest to you, Dick, that were I permitted to peep into that Elizabeth-chamber, and see the persons you have sketched conversing in flesh and blood, I should not be a jot nearer guessing the nature of their business, than I am at this moment while looking at your sketch. Only generally, from the languishing look of the young lady, and the care you have taken to present a very handsome leg on the part of the gentleman, I presume there is some reference to a love affair between them."

"Do you really presume to form such a bold conjecture?" said Tinto. "And the indignant earnestness with which you see the man urge his suit — the unresisting and passive despair of the younger female — the stern air of inflexible determination in the elder woman, whose looks express at once consciousness that she is acting wrong, and a firm

determination to persist in the course she has adopted" ——

"If her looks express all this, my dear Tinto," replied I, interrupting him, "your pencil rivals the dramatic art of Mr. Puff in the Critic, who crammed a whole complicated sentence into the expressive shake of Lord Burleigh's head."

"My good friend, Peter," replied Tinto, "I observe you are perfectly incorrigible; however, I have compassion on your dulness, and am unwilling you should be deprived of the pleasure of understanding my picture, and of gaining, at the same time, a subject for your own pen. You must know then, last summer, while I was taking sketches on the coast of East Lothian and Berwickshire, I was seduced into the mountains of Lammermoor by the account I received of some remains of antiquity in that district. Those with which I was most struck, were the ruins of an ancient castle in which that Elizabeth-chamber, as you call it, once existed. I resided for two or three days at a farm-house in the neighbourhood, where the aged goodwife was well acquainted with the history of the castle, and the events which had taken place in it. One of these was of a nature so interesting and singular, that my attention was divided between my wish to draw the old ruins in landscape, and to represent, in a history-piece, the singular events which have taken place in it. Here are my notes of the tale," said poor Dick, handing a parcel of loose scraps, partly scratched over with his pencil, partly with his pen, where outlines of caricatures, sketches of turrets, mills, old gables, and dovecots, disputed the ground with his written memoranda.

I proceeded, however, to decipher the substance

of the manuscript as well as I could, and wove it into the following Tale, in which, following in part, though not entirely, my friend Tinto's advice, I endeavoured to render my narrative rather descriptive than dramatic. My favourite propensity, however, has at times overcome me, and my persons, like many others in this talking world, speak now and then a great deal more than they act.

CHAPTER II.

> Well, lords, we have not got that which we have;
> 'Tis not enough our foes are this time fled,
> Being opposites of such repairing nature.
>
> *Second Part of Henry VI.*

In the gorge of a pass or mountain glen, ascending from the fertile plains of East Lothian, there stood in former times an extensive castle, of which only the ruins are now visible. Its ancient proprietors were a race of powerful and warlike barons, who bore the same name with the castle itself, which was Ravenswood. Their line extended to a remote period of antiquity, and they had intermarried with the Douglasses, Humes, Swintons, Hays, and other families of power and distinction in the same country. Their history was frequently involved in that of Scotland itself, in whose annals their feats are recorded. The Castle of Ravenswood, occupying, and in some measure commanding, a pass betwixt Berwickshire or the Merse, as the south-eastern province of Scotland is termed, and the Lothians, was of importance both in times of foreign war and domestic discord. It was frequently besieged with ardour, and defended with obstinacy, and, of course, its owners played a conspicuous part in story. But their house had its revolutions, like all sublunary things; it became greatly declined from its splendour about the middle of the 17th century; and towards the period of the Revolution, the last pro-

prietor of Ravenswood Castle saw himself compelled to part with the ancient family seat, and to remove himself to a lonely and sea-beaten tower, which, situated on the bleak shores between Saint Abb's Head and the village of Eyemouth, looked out on the lonely and boisterous German Ocean. A black domain of wild pasture-land surrounded their new residence, and formed the remains of their property.

Lord Ravenswood, the heir of this ruined family, was far from bending his mind to his new condition of life. In the civil war of 1689, he had espoused the sinking side, and although he had escaped without the forfeiture of life or land, his blood had been attainted, and his title abolished. He was now called Lord Ravenswood only in courtesy.

This forfeited nobleman inherited the pride and turbulence, though not the fortune of his house, and, as he imputed the final declension of his family to a particular individual, he honoured that person with his full portion of hatred. This was the very man who had now become, by purchase, proprietor of Ravenswood, and the domains of which the heir of the house now stood dispossessed. He was descended of a family much less ancient than that of Lord Ravenswood, and which had only risen to wealth and political importance during the great civil wars. He himself had been bred to the bar, and had held high offices in the state, maintaining through life the character of a skilful fisher in the troubled waters of a state divided by factions, and governed by delegated authority; and of one who contrived to amass considerable sums of money in a country where there

was but little to be gathered, and who equally knew the value of wealth, and the various means of augmenting it, and using it as an engine of increasing his power and influence.

Thus qualified and gifted, he was a dangerous antagonist to the fierce and imprudent Ravenswood. Whether he had given him good cause for the enmity with which the Baron regarded him, was a point on which men spoke differently. Some said the quarrel arose merely from the vindictive spirit and envy of Lord Ravenswood, who could not patiently behold another, though by just and fair purchase, become the proprietor of the estate and castle of his forefathers. But the greater part of the public, prone to slander the wealthy in their absence, as to flatter them in their presence, held a less charitable opinion. They said, that the Lord Keeper (for to this height Sir William Ashton had ascended) had, previous to the final purchase of the estate of Ravenswood, been concerned in extensive pecuniary transactions with the former proprietor; and, rather intimating what was probable, than affirming any thing positively, they asked which party was likely to have the advantage in stating and enforcing the claims arising out of these complicated affairs, and more than hinted the advantages which the cool lawyer and able politician must necessarily possess over the hot, fiery, and imprudent character, whom he had involved in legal toils and pecuniary snares.

The character of the times aggravated these suspicions. "In those days there was no king in Israel." Since the departure of James VI. to assume the richer and more powerful crown of England, there had existed in Scotland contending par-

ties, formed among the aristocracy, by whom, as their intrigues at the court of St. James's chanced to prevail, the delegated powers of sovereignty were alternately swayed. The evils attending upon this system of government, resemble those which afflict the tenants of an Irish estate, the property of an absentee. There was no supreme power, claiming and possessing a general interest with the community at large, to whom the oppressed might appeal from subordinate tyranny, either for justice or for mercy. Let a monarch be as indolent, as selfish, as much disposed to arbitrary power as he will, still, in a free country, his own interests are so clearly connected with those of the public at large, and the evil consequences to his own authority are so obvious and imminent when a different course is pursued, that common policy, as well as common feeling, point to the equal distribution of justice, and to the establishment of the throne in righteousness. Thus, even sovereigns, remarkable for usurpation and tyranny, have been found rigorous in the administration of justice among their subjects, in cases where their own power and passions were not compromised.

It is very different when the powers of sovereignty are delegated to the head of an aristocratic faction, rivalled and pressed closely in the race of ambition by an adverse leader. His brief and precarious enjoyment of power must be employed in rewarding his partisans, in extending his influence, in oppressing and crushing his adversaries. Even Abou Hassan, the most disinterested of all viceroys, forgot not, during his caliphate of one day, to send a *douceur* of one thousand pieces of gold to his own household; and the Scottish vicegerents.

raised to power by the strength of their faction, failed not to embrace the same means of rewarding them.

The administration of justice, in particular, was infected by the most gross partiality. A case of importance scarcely occurred, in which there was not some ground for bias or partiality on the part of the judges, who were so little able to withstand the temptation, that the adage, "Show me the man, and I will show you the law," became as prevalent as it was scandalous. One corruption led the way to others still more gross and profligate. The judge who lent his sacred authority in one case to support a friend, and in another to crush an enemy, and whose decisions were founded on family connexions, or political relations, could not be supposed inaccessible to direct personal motives; and the purse of the wealthy was too often believed to be thrown into the scale to weigh down the cause of the poor litigant. The subordinate officers of the law affected little scruple concerning bribery. Pieces of plate, and bags of money, were sent in presents to the king's counsel, to influence their conduct, and poured forth, says a contemporary writer, like billets of wood upon their floors, without even the decency of concealment.

In such times, it was not over uncharitable to suppose, that the statesman, practised in courts of law, and a powerful member of a triumphant cabal, might find and use means of advantage over his less skilful and less favoured adversary; and if it had been supposed that Sir William Ashton's conscience had been too delicate to profit by these advantages, it was believed that his ambition and desire of extending his wealth and consequence,

found as strong a stimulus in the exhortations of his lady, as the daring aim of Macbeth in the days of yore.

Lady Ashton was of a family more distinguished than that of her lord, an advantage which she did not fail to use to the uttermost, in maintaining and extending her husband's influence over others, and, unless she was greatly belied, her own over him. She had been beautiful, and was stately and majestic in her appearance. Endowed by nature with strong powers and violent passions, experience had taught her to employ the one, and to conceal, if not to moderate, the other. She was a severe and strict observer of the external forms, at least, of devotion; her hospitality was splendid, even to ostentation; her address and manners, agreeable to the pattern most valued in Scotland at the period, were grave, dignified, and severely regulated by the rules of etiquette. Her character had always been beyond the breath of slander. And yet, with all these qualities to excite respect, Lady Ashton was seldom mentioned in the terms of love or affection. Interest, — the interest of her family, if not her own, — seemed too obviously the motive of her actions; and where this is the case, the sharp-judging and malignant public are not easily imposed upon by outward show. It was seen and ascertained, that, in her most graceful courtesies and compliments, Lady Ashton no more lost sight of her object than the falcon in his airy wheel turns his quick eyes from his destined quarry; and hence, something of doubt and suspicion qualified the feelings with which her equals received her attentions. With her inferiors these feelings were mingled with fear; an impression useful to her purposes, so far as it en-

forced ready compliance with her requests, and implicit obedience to her commands, but detrimental, because it cannot exist with affection or regard.

Even her husband, it is said, upon whose fortunes her talents and address had produced such emphatic influence, regarded her with respectful awe rather than confiding attachment; and report said, there were times when he considered his grandeur as dearly purchased at the expense of domestic thraldom. Of this, however, much might be suspected, but little could be accurately known; Lady Ashton regarded the honour of her husband as her own, and was well aware how much that would suffer in the public eye should he appear a vassal to his wife. In all her arguments, his opinion was quoted as infallible; his taste was appealed to, and his sentiments received, with the air of deference which a dutiful wife might seem to owe to a husband of Sir William Ashton's rank and character. But there was something under all this which rung false and hollow; and to those who watched this couple with close, and perhaps malicious scrutiny, it seemed evident, that, in the haughtiness of a firmer character, higher birth, and more decided views of aggrandizement, the lady looked with some contempt on her husband, and that he regarded her with jealous fear, rather than with love or admiration.

Still, however, the leading and favourite interests of Sir William Ashton and his lady were the same, and they failed not to work in concert, although without cordiality, and to testify, in all exterior circumstances, that respect for each other, which they were aware was necessary to secure that of the public.

Their union was crowned with several children, of whom three survived. One, the eldest son, was absent on his travels; the second, a girl of seventeen, and the third, a boy about three years younger, resided with their parents in Edinburgh, during the sessions of the Scottish Parliament and Privy-council, at other times in the old Gothic castle of Ravenswood, to which the Lord Keeper had made large additions in the style of the seventeenth century.

Allan Lord Ravenswood, the late proprietor of that ancient mansion and the large estate annexed to it, continued for some time to wage ineffectual war with his successor concerning various points to which their former transactions had given rise, and which were successively determined in favour of the wealthy and powerful competitor, until death closed the litigation, by summoning Ravenswood to a higher bar. The thread of life, which had been long wasting, gave way during a fit of violent and impotent fury, with which he was assailed on receiving the news of the loss of a cause, founded, perhaps, rather in equity than in law, the last which he had maintained against his powerful antagonist. His son witnessed his dying agonies, and heard the curses which he breathed against his adversary, as if they had conveyed to him a legacy of vengeance. Other circumstances happened to exasperate a passion, which was, and had long been, a prevalent vice in the Scottish disposition.

It was a November morning, and the cliffs which overlooked the ocean were hung with thick and heavy mist, when the portals of the ancient and half-ruinous tower, in which Lord Ravenswood had spent the last and troubled years of his life, opened,

that his mortal remains might pass forward to an abode yet more dreary and lonely. The pomp of attendance, to which the deceased had, in his latter years, been a stranger, was revived as he was about to be consigned to the realms of forgetfulness.

Banner after banner, with the various devices and coats of this ancient family and its connexions, followed each other in mournful procession from under the low-browed archway of the court-yard. The principal gentry of the country attended in the deepest mourning, and tempered the pace of their long train of horses to the solemn march befitting the occasion. Trumpets, with banners of crape attached to them, sent forth their long and melancholy notes to regulate the movements of the procession. An immense train of inferior mourners and menials closed the rear, which had not yet issued from the castle-gate, when the van had reached the chapel where the body was to be deposited.

Contrary to the custom, and even to the law of the time, the body was met by a priest of the Scottish Episcopal communion, arrayed in his surplice, and prepared to read over the coffin of the deceased the funeral service of the church. Such had been the desire of Lord Ravenswood in his last illness, and it was readily complied with by the tory gentlemen, or cavaliers, as they affected to style themselves, in which faction most of his kinsmen were enrolled. The presbyterian church-judicatory of the bounds, considering the ceremony as a bravading insult upon their authority, had applied to the Lord Keeper, as the nearest privy-councillor, for a warrant to prevent its being carried into effect; so that, when the clergyman had opened his prayer-book, an officer of the law, supported by some armed men,

commanded him to be silent. An insult, which fired the whole assembly with indignation, was particularly and instantly resented by the only son of the deceased, Edgar, popularly called the Master of Ravenswood, a youth of about twenty years of age. He clapped his hand on his sword, and, bidding the official person to desist at his peril from farther interruption, commanded the clergyman to proceed. The man attempted to enforce his commission, but as an hundred swords at once glittered in the air, he contented himself with protesting against the violence which had been offered to him in the execution of his duty, and stood aloof, a sullen and moody spectator of the ceremonial, muttering as one who should say, "You'll rue the day that clogs me with this answer."

The scene was worthy of an artist's pencil. Under the very arch of the house of death, the clergyman, affrighted at the scene, and trembling for his own safety, hastily and unwillingly rehearsed the solemn service of the church, and spoke dust to dust, and ashes to ashes, over ruined pride and decayed prosperity. Around stood the relations of the deceased, their countenances more in anger than in sorrow, and the drawn swords which they brandished forming a violent contrast with their deep mourning habits. In the countenance of the young man alone, resentment seemed for the moment overpowered by the deep agony with which he beheld his nearest, and almost his only friend, consigned to the tomb of his ancestry. A relative observed him turn deadly pale, when, all rites being now duly observed, it became the duty of the chief mourner to lower down into the charnel vault, where mouldering coffins showed their tattered velvet and decayed plating, the head

of the corpse which was to be their partner in corruption. He stept to the youth and offered his assistance, which, by a mute motion, Edgar Ravenswood rejected. Firmly, and without a tear, he performed that last duty. The stone was laid on the sepulchre, the door of the aisle was locked, and the youth took possession of its massive key.

As the crowd left the chapel, he paused on the steps which led to its Gothic chancel. "Gentlemen and friends," he said, "you have this day done no common duty to the body of your deceased kinsman. The rites of due observance, which, in other countries, are allowed as the due of the meanest Christian, would this day have been denied to the body of your relative — not certainly sprung of the meanest house in Scotland — had it not been assured to him by your courage. Others bury their dead in sorrow and tears, in silence and in reverence; our funeral rites are marred by the intrusion of bailiffs and ruffians, and our grief — the grief due to our departed friend — is chased from our cheeks by the glow of just indignation. But it is well that I know from what quiver this arrow has come forth. It was only he that dug the grave who could have the mean cruelty to disturb the obsequies; and Heaven do as much to me and more, if I requite not to this man and his house the ruin and disgrace he has brought on me and mine!"

A numerous part of the assembly applauded this speech, as the spirited expression of just resentment; but the more cool and judicious regretted that it had been uttered. The fortunes of the heir of Ravenswood were too low to brave the farther hostility which they imagined these open expressions of resentment must necessarily provoke. Their

apprehensions, however, proved groundless, at least in the immediate consequences of this affair.

The mourners returned to the tower, there, according to a custom but recently abolished in Scotland, to carouse deep healths to the memory of the deceased, to make the house of sorrow ring with sounds of jovialty and debauch, and to diminish, by the expense of a large and profuse entertainment, the limited revenues of the heir of him whose funeral they thus strangely honoured. It was the custom, however, and on the present occasion it was fully observed. The tables swam in wine, the populace feasted in the court-yard, the yeomen in the kitchen and buttery; and two years' rent of Ravenswood's remaining property hardly defrayed the charge of the funeral revel. The wine did its office on all but the Master of Ravenswood, a title which he still retained, though forfeiture had attached to that of his father. He, while passing around the cup which he himself did not taste, soon listened to a thousand exclamations against the Lord Keeper, and passionate protestations of attachment to himself, and to the honour of his house. He listened with dark and sullen brow to ebullitions which he considered justly as equally evanescent with the crimson bubbles on the brink of the goblet, or at least with the vapours which its contents excited in the brains of the revellers around him.

When the last flask was emptied, they took their leave, with deep protestations — to be forgotten on the morrow, if, indeed, those who made them should not think it necessary for their safety to make a more solemn retractation.

Accepting their adieus with an air of contempt which he could scarce conceal, Ravenswood at

length beheld his ruinous habitation cleared of this confluence of riotous guests, and returned to the deserted hall, which now appeared doubly lonely from the cessation of that clamour to which it had so lately echoed. But its space was peopled by phantoms, which the imagination of the young heir conjured up before him — the tarnished honour and degraded fortunes of his house, the destruction of his own hopes, and the triumph of that family by whom they had been ruined. To a mind naturally of a gloomy cast, here was ample room for meditation, and the musings of young Ravenswood were deep and unwitnessed.

The peasant, who shows the ruins of the tower, which still crown the beetling cliff and behold the war of the waves, though no more tenanted save by the sea-mew and cormorant, even yet affirms, that on this fatal night the Master of Ravenswood, by the bitter exclamations of his despair, evoked some evil fiend, under whose malignant influence the future tissue of incidents was woven. Alas! what fiend can suggest more desperate counsels, than those adopted under the guidance of our own violent and unresisted passions?

CHAPTER III.

Over Gods forebode, then said the **King,**
That thou shouldst shoot at me.
William Bell, Clim o' the Clough, &c.

On the morning after the funeral, the legal officer, whose authority had been found insufficient to effect an interruption of the funeral solemnities of the late Lord Ravenswood, hastened to state before the Keeper the resistance which he had met with in the execution of his office.

The statesman was seated in a spacious library, once a banqueting-room in the old Castle of Ravenswood, as was evident from the armorial insignia still displayed on the carved roof, which was vaulted with Spanish chestnut, and on the stained glass of the casement, through which gleamed a dim yet rich light, on the long rows of shelves, bending under the weight of legal commentators and monkish historians, whose ponderous volumes formed the chief and most valued contents of a Scottish historian of the period.(*d*) On the massive oaken table and reading-desk, lay a confused mass of letters, petitions, and parchments; to toil amongst which was the pleasure at once and the plague of Sir William Ashton's life. His appearance was grave and even noble, well becoming one who held an high office in the state; and it was not, save after long and intimate conversation with him upon

topics of pressing and personal interest, that a stranger could have discovered something vacillating and uncertain in his resolutions; an infirmity of purpose, arising from a cautious and timid disposition, which, as he was conscious of its internal influence on his mind, he was, from pride as well as policy, most anxious to conceal from others.

He listened with great apparent composure to an exaggerated account of the tumult which had taken place at the funeral, of the contempt thrown on his own authority, and that of the church and state; nor did he seem moved even by the faithful report of the insulting and threatening language which had been uttered by young Ravenswood and others, and obviously directed against himself. He heard, also, what the man had been able to collect, in a very distorted and aggravated shape, of the toasts which had been drunk, and the menaces uttered, at the subsequent entertainment. In fine, he made careful notes of all these particulars, and of the names of the persons by whom, in case of need, an accusation, founded upon these violent proceedings, could be witnessed and made good, and dismissed his informer, secure that he was now master of the remaining fortune, and even of the personal liberty, of young Ravenswood.

When the door had closed upon the officer of the law, the Lord Keeper remained for a moment in deep meditation; then, starting from his seat, paced the apartment as one about to take a sudden and energetic resolution. "Young Ravenswood," he muttered, "is now mine — he is my own — he has placed himself in my hand, and he shall bend or break. I have not forgot the determined and

dogged obstinacy with which his father fought every point to the last, resisted every effort at compromise, embroiled me in lawsuits, and attempted to assail my character when he could not otherwise impugn my rights. This boy he has left behind him — this Edgar — this hot-headed, hair-brained fool, has wrecked his vessel before she has cleared the harbour. I must see that he gains no advantage of some turning tide which may again float him off. These memoranda, properly stated to the Privy Council, cannot but be construed into an aggravated riot, in which the dignity both of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities stand committed. A heavy fine might be imposed; an order for committing him to Edinburgh or Blackness Castle seems not improper; even a charge of treason might be laid on many of these words and expressions, though God forbid I should prosecute the matter to that extent. No, I will not; — I will not touch his life, even if it should be in my power; — and yet, if he lives till a change of times, what follows? — Restitution — perhaps revenge. I know Athole promised his interest to old Ravenswood, and here is his son already bandying and making a faction by his own contemptible influence. What a ready tool he would be for the use of those who are watching the downfall of our administration!"

While these thoughts were agitating the mind of the wily statesman, and while he was persuading himself that his own interest and safety, as well as those of his friends and party, depended on using the present advantage to the uttermost against young Ravenswood, the Lord Keeper sate down to his desk, and proceeded to draw up, for the information of the Privy Council, an account of the dis-

orderly proceedings which, in contempt of his warrant, had taken place at the funeral of Lord Ravenswood. The names of most of the parties concerned, as well as the fact itself, would, he was well aware, sound odiously in the ears of his colleagues in administration, and most likely instigate them to make an example of young Ravenswood, at least, *in terrorem.*

It was a point of delicacy, however, to select such expressions as might infer the young man's culpability, without seeming directly to urge it, which, on the part of Sir William Ashton, his father's ancient antagonist, could not but appear odious and invidious. While he was in the act of composition, labouring to find words which might indicate Edgar Ravenswood to be the cause of the uproar, without specifically making such a charge, Sir William, in a pause of his task, chanced, in looking upward, to see the crest of the family, (for whose heir he was whetting the arrows, and disposing the toils of the law,) carved upon one of the corbeilles from which the vaulted roof of the apartment sprung. It was a black bull's head, with the legend, "I bide my time;" and the occasion upon which it was adopted mingled itself singularly and impressively with the subject of his present reflections.

It was said by a constant tradition, that a Malisius de Ravenswood had, in the thirteenth century, been deprived of his castle and lands by a powerful usurper, who had for a while enjoyed his spoils in quiet. At length, on the eve of a costly banquet, Ravenswood, who had watched his opportunity, introduced himself into the castle with a small band of faithful retainers. The serving of the expected feast was impatiently looked for by the

guests, and clamorously demanded by the temporary master of the castle. Ravenswood, who had assumed the disguise of a sewer upon the occasion, answered, in a stern voice, "I bide my time;" and at the same moment a bull's head, the ancient symbol of death, (*e*) was placed upon the table. The explosion of the conspiracy took place upon the signal, and the usurper and his followers were put to death. Perhaps there was something in this still known and often repeated story, which came immediately home to the breast and conscience of the Lord Keeper; for, putting from him the paper on which he had begun his report, and carefully locking the memoranda which he had prepared, into a cabinet which stood beside him, he proceeded to walk abroad, as if for the purpose of collecting his ideas, and reflecting farther on the consequences of the step which he was about to take, ere yet they became inevitable.

In passing through a large Gothic anteroom, Sir William Ashton heard the sound of his daughter's lute. Music, when the performers are concealed, affects us with a pleasure mingled with surprise, and reminds us of the natural concert of birds among the leafy bowers. The statesman, though little accustomed to give way to emotions of this natural and simple class, was still a man and a father. He stopped, therefore, and listened, while the silver tones of Lucy Ashton's voice mingled with the accompaniment in an ancient air, to which some one had adapted the following words:

"Look not thou on beauty's charming,—
Sit thou still when kings are arming,—
Taste not when the wine-cup glistens,—
Speak not when the people listens,—

Stop thine ear against the singer,—
From the red gold keep thy finger,—
Vacant heart, and hand, and eye,—
Easy live and quiet die."

The sounds ceased, and the Keeper entered his daughter's apartment.

The words she had chosen seemed particularly adapted to her character; for Lucy Ashton's exquisitely beautiful, yet somewhat girlish features, were formed to express peace of mind, serenity, and indifference to the tinsel of worldly pleasure. Her locks, which were of shadowy gold, divided on a brow of exquisite whiteness, like a gleam of broken and pallid sunshine upon a hill of snow. The expression of the countenance was in the last degree gentle, soft, timid, and feminine, and seemed rather to shrink from the most casual look of a stranger, than to court his admiration. Something there was of a Madonna cast, perhaps the result of delicate health, and of residence in a family, where the dispositions of the inmates were fiercer, more active, and energetic, than her own.

Yet her passiveness of disposition was by no means owing to an indifferent or unfeeling mind. Left to the impulse of her own taste and feelings, Lucy Ashton was peculiarly accessible to those of a romantic cast. Her secret delight was in the old legendary tales of ardent devotion and unalterable affection, chequered as they so often are with strange adventures and supernatural horrors. This was her favoured fairy realm, and here she erected her aerial palaces. But it was only in secret that she laboured at this delusive, though delightful architecture. In her retired chamber, or in the woodland bower which she had chosen for her own, and

called after her name, she was in fancy distributing the prizes at the tournament, or raining down influence from her eyes on the valiant combatants; or she was wandering in the wilderness with Una, under escort of the generous lion; or she was identifying herself with the simple, yet noble-minded Miranda, in the isle of wonder and enchantment.

But in her exterior relations to things of this world, Lucy willingly received the ruling impulse from those around her. The alternative was, in general, too indifferent to her to render resistance desirable, and she willingly found a motive for decision in the opinion of her friends, which perhaps she might have sought for in vain in her own choice. Every reader must have observed in some family of his acquaintance, some individual of a temper soft and yielding, who, mixed with stronger and more ardent minds, is borne along by the will of others, with as little power of opposition as the flower which is flung into a running stream. It usually happens that such a compliant and easy disposition, which resigns itself without murmur to the guidance of others, becomes the darling of those to whose inclinations its own seem to be offered, in ungrudging and ready sacrifice.

This was eminently the case with Lucy Ashton. Her politic, wary, and worldly father, felt for her an affection, the strength of which sometimes surprised him into an unusual emotion. Her elder brother, who trode the path of ambition with a haughtier step than his father, had also more of human affection. A soldier, and in a dissolute age, he preferred his sister Lucy even to pleasure, and to military preferment and distinction. Her younger brother, at an age when trifles chiefly occupied his

mind, made her the confidant of all his pleasures and anxieties, his success in field-sports, and his quarrels with his tutor and instructors. To these details, however trivial, Lucy lent patient and not indifferent attention. They moved and interested Henry, and that was enough to secure her ear.

Her mother alone did not feel that distinguished and predominating affection, with which the rest of the family cherished Lucy. She regarded what she termed her daughter's want of spirit, as a decided mark, that the more plebeian blood of her father predominated in Lucy's veins, and used to call her in derision her Lammermoor Shepherdess. To dislike so gentle and inoffensive a being was impossible; but Lady Ashton preferred her eldest son, on whom had descended a large portion of her own ambitious and undaunted disposition, to a daughter whose softness of temper seemed allied to feebleness of mind. Her eldest son was the more partially beloved by his mother, because, contrary to the usual custom of Scottish families of distinction, he had been named after the head of the house.

"My Sholto," she said, "will support the untarnished honour of his maternal house, and elevate and support that of his father. Poor Lucy is unfit for courts, or crowded halls. Some country laird must be her husband, rich enough to supply her with every comfort, without an effort on her own part, so that she may have nothing to shed a tear for but the tender apprehension lest he may break his neck in a fox-chase. It was not so, however, that our house was raised, nor is it so that it can be fortified and augmented. The Lord Keeper's dignity is yet new; it must be borne as if we were

used to its weight, worthy of it, and prompt to assert and maintain it. Before ancient authorities, men bend, from customary and hereditary deference; in our presence, they will stand erect, unless they are compelled to prostrate themselves. A daughter fit for the sheep-fold or the cloister, is ill qualified to exact respect where it is yielded with reluctance; and since Heaven refused us a third boy, Lucy should have held a character fit to supply his place. The hour will be a happy one which disposes her hand in marriage to some one whose energy is greater than her own, or whose ambition is of as low an order."

So meditated a mother, to whom the qualities of her children's hearts, as well as the prospect of their domestic happiness, seemed light in comparison to their rank and temporal greatness. But, like many a parent of hot and impatient character, she was mistaken in estimating the feelings of her daughter, who, under a semblance of extreme indifference, nourished the germ of those passions which sometimes spring up in one night, like the gourd of the prophet, and astonish the observer by their unexpected ardour and intensity. In fact, Lucy's sentiments seemed chill, because nothing had occurred to interest or awaken them. Her life had hitherto flowed on in a uniform and gentle tenor, and happy for her had not its present smoothness of current resembled that of the stream as it glides downwards to the waterfall!

"So, Lucy," said her father, entering as her song was ended, "does your musical philosopher teach you to contemn the world before you know it?—that is surely something premature. Or did you but speak according to the fashion of fair maidens,

who are always to hold the pleasures of life in contempt till they are pressed upon them by the address of some gentle knight?"

Lucy blushed, disclaimed any inference respecting her own choice being drawn from her selection of a song, and readily laid aside her instrument at her father's request that she would attend him in his walk.

A large and well-wooded park, or rather chase, stretched along the hill behind the castle, which occupying, as we have noticed, a pass ascending from the plain, seemed built in its very gorge to defend the forest ground which arose behind it in shaggy majesty. Into this romantic region the father and daughter proceeded, arm in arm, by a noble avenue overarched by embowering elms, beneath which groups of the fallow-deer were seen to stray in distant perspective. As they paced slowly on, admiring the different points of view, for which Sir William Ashton, notwithstanding the nature of his usual avocations, had considerable taste and feeling, they were overtaken by the forester, or park-keeper, who, intent on silvan sport, was proceeding with his cross-bow over his arm, and a hound led in leash by his boy, into the interior of the wood.

"Going to shoot us a piece of venison, Norman?" said his master, as he returned the woodman's salutation.

"Saul, your honour, and that I am. Will it please you to see the sport?"

"O no," said his lordship, after looking at his daughter, whose colour fled at the idea of seeing the deer shot, although had her father expressed his wish that they should accompany Norman, it

was probable she would not even have hinted her reluctance.

The forester shrugged his shoulders. "It was a disheartening thing," he said, "when none of the gentles came down to see the sport. He hoped Captain Sholto would be soon hame, or he might shut up his shop entirely; for Mr. Harry was kept sae close wi' his Latin nonsense, that, though his will was very gude to be in the wood from morning till night, there would be a hopeful lad lost, and no making a man of him. It was not so, he had heard, in Lord Ravenswood's time — when a buck was to be killed, man and mother's son ran to see; and when the deer fell, the knife was always presented to the knight, and he never gave less than a dollar for the compliment. And there was Edgar Ravenswood — Master of Ravenswood that is now — when he goes up to the wood — there hasna been a better hunter since Tristrem's time — when Sir Edgar hauds out,[1] down goes the deer, faith. But we hae lost a' sense of wood-craft on this side of the hill."

There was much in this harangue highly displeasing to the Lord Keeper's feelings; he could not help observing that his menial despised him almost avowedly for not possessing that taste for sport, which in those times was deemed the natural and indispensable attribute of a real gentleman. But the master of the game is, in all country houses, a man of great importance, and entitled to use considerable freedom of speech. Sir William, therefore, only smiled and replied, he had something else to think upon to-day than killing deer; meantime, taking out his purse, he gave the ranger a

[1] *Hauds out.* Holds out, *i. e.* presents his piece.

dollar for his encouragement. The fellow received it as the waiter of a fashionable hotel receives double his proper fee from the hands of a country gentleman, — that is, with a smile, in which pleasure at the gift is mingled with contempt for the ignorance of the donor. "Your honour is the bad paymaster," he said, "who pays before it is done. What would you do were I to miss the buck after you have paid me my wood-fee?"

"I suppose," said the Keeper, smiling, "you would hardly guess what I mean were I to tell you of a *condictio indebiti?*" (*f*)

"Not I, on my saul — I guess it is some law phrase — but sue a beggar, and — your honour knows what follows. — Well, but I will be just with you, and if bow and brach fail not, you shall have a piece of game two fingers fat on the brisket."

As he was about to go off, his master again called him, and asked, as if by accident, whether the Master of Ravenswood was actually so brave a man and so good a shooter as the world spoke him?

"Brave! — brave enough, I warrant you," answered Norman; "I was in the wood at Tyninghame, when there was a sort of gallants hunting with my lord; on my saul, there was a buck turned to bay made us all stand back; a stout old Trojan of the first head, ten-tyned branches, and a brow as broad as e'er a bullock's. Egad, he dashed at the old lord, and there would have been inlake among the peerage, if the Master had not whipt roundly in, and hamstrung him with his cutlass. He was but sixteen then, bless his heart!"

"And is he as ready with the gun as with the couteau?" said Sir William.

"He'll strike this silver dollar out from between

my finger and thumb at fourscore yards, and I'll hold it out for a gold merk; what more would ye have of eye, hand, lead, and gunpowder?"

"O no more to be wished, certainly," said the Lord Keeper; "but we keep you from your sport, Norman. Good morrow, good Norman."

And humming his rustic roundelay, the yeoman went on his road, the sound of his rough voice gradually dying away as the distance betwixt them increased: —

The monk must arise when the matins ring,
  The abbot may sleep to their chime;
But the yeoman must start when the bugles sing,
  'Tis time, my hearts, 'tis time.

There's bucks and raes on Bilhope braes, (*g*)
  There's a herd on Shortwood Shaw;
But a lily-white doe in the garden goes,
  She's fairly worth them a'.

"Has this fellow," said the Lord Keeper, when the yeoman's song had died on the wind, "ever served the Ravenswood people, that he seems so much interested in them? I suppose you know, Lucy, for you make it a point of conscience to record the special history of every boor about the castle."

"I am not quite so faithful a chronicler, my dear father; but I believe that Norman once served here while a boy, and before he went to Ledington, whence you hired him. But if you want to know any thing of the former family, Old Alice is the best authority."

"And what should I have to do with them, pray, Lucy," said her father, "or with their history or accomplishments?"

"Nay, I do not know, sir; only that you were asking questions of Norman about young Ravenswood."

"Pshaw, child!" — replied her father, yet immediately added, "And who is old Alice? I think you know all the old women in the country."

"To be sure I do, or how could I help the old creatures when they are in hard times? And as to old Alice, she is the very empress of old women, and queen of gossips, so far as legendary lore is concerned. She is blind, poor old soul, but when she speaks to you, you would think she has some way of looking into your very heart. I am sure I often cover my face, or turn it away, for it seems as if she saw one change colour, though she has been blind these twenty years. She is worth visiting, were it but to say you have seen a blind and paralytic old woman have so much acuteness of perception, and dignity of manners. I assure you, she might be a countess from her language and behaviour. — Come, you must go to see Alice; we are not a quarter of a mile from her cottage."

"All this, my dear," said the Lord Keeper, "is no answer to my question, who this woman is, and what is her connexion with the former proprietor's family?"

"O, it was something of a nourice-ship, I believe; and she remained here, because her two grandsons were engaged in your service. But it was against her will, I fancy; for the poor old creature is always regretting the change of times and of property."

"I am much obliged to her," answered the Lord Keeper. "She and her folk eat my bread and drink my cup, and are lamenting all the while that

they are not still under a family which never could do good, either to themselves or any one else!"

"Indeed," replied Lucy, "I am certain you do old Alice injustice. She has nothing mercenary about her, and would not accept a penny in charity, if it were to save her from being starved. She is only talkative, like all old folk, when you put them upon stories of their youth; and she speaks about the Ravenswood people, because she lived under them so many years. But I am sure she is grateful to you, sir, for your protection, and that she would rather speak to you, than to any other person in the whole world beside. Do, sir, come and see old Alice."

And with the freedom of an indulged daughter, she dragged the Lord Keeper in the direction she desired.

CHAPTER IV.

> Through tops of the high trees she did descry
> A little smoke, whose vapour, thin, and light,
> Reeking aloft, uprolled to the sky,
> Which cheerful sign did send unto her sight,
> That in the same did wonne some living wight.
>
> SPENSER.

LUCY acted as her father's guide, for he was too much engrossed with his political labours, or with society, to be perfectly acquainted with his own extensive domains, and, moreover, was generally an inhabitant of the city of Edinburgh; and she, on the other hand, had, with her mother, resided the whole summer in Ravenswood, and, partly from taste, partly from want of any other amusement, had, by her frequent rambles, learned to know each lane, alley, dingle, or bushy dell,

> "And every bosky bourne from side to side."

We have said that the Lord Keeper was not indifferent to the beauties of nature; and we add, in justice to him, that he felt them doubly, when pointed out by the beautiful, simple, and interesting girl, who, hanging on his arm with filial kindness, now called him to admire the size of some ancient oak, and now the unexpected turn, where the path developing its maze from glen or dingle, suddenly reached an eminence commanding an extensive view of the plains beneath them, and then gradually glided away from the prospect to lose

itself among rocks and thickets, and guide to scenes of deeper seclusion.

It was when pausing on one of those points of extensive and commanding view, that Lucy told her father they were close by the cottage of her blind protegée; and on turning from the little hill, a path which led around it, worn by the daily steps of the infirm inmate, brought them in sight of the hut, which, embosomed in a deep and obscure dell, seemed to have been so situated purposely to bear a correspondence with the darkened state of its inhabitant.

The cottage was situated immediately under a tall rock, which in some measure beetled over it, as if threatening to drop some detached fragment from its brow on the frail tenement beneath. The hut itself was constructed of turf and stones, and rudely roofed over with thatch, much of which was in a dilapidated condition. The thin blue smoke rose from it in a light column, and curled upward along the white face of the incumbent rock, giving the scene a tint of exquisite softness. In a small and rude garden, surrounded by straggling elder-bushes, which formed a sort of imperfect hedge, sat near to the bee-hives, by the produce of which she lived, that "woman old," whom Lucy had brought her father hither to visit.

Whatever there had been which was disastrous in her fortune — whatever there was miserable in her dwelling, it was easy to judge, by the first glance, that neither years, poverty, misfortune, nor infirmity, had broken the spirit of this remarkable woman.

She occupied a turf-seat, placed under a weeping birch of unusual magnitude and age, as Judah is

represented sitting under her palm-tree, with an air at once of majesty and of dejection. Her figure was tall, commanding, and but little bent by the infirmities of old age. Her dress, though that of a peasant, was uncommonly clean, forming in that particular a strong contrast to most of her rank, and was disposed with an attention to neatness, and even to taste, equally unusual. But it was her expression of countenance which chiefly struck the spectator, and induced most persons to address her with a degree of deference and civility very inconsistent with the miserable state of her dwelling, and which, nevertheless, she received with that easy composure which showed she felt it to be her due. She had once been beautiful, but her beauty had been of a bold and masculine cast, such as does not survive the bloom of youth; yet her features continued to express strong sense, deep reflection, and a character of sober pride, which, as we have already said of her dress, appeared to argue a conscious superiority to those of her own rank. It scarce seemed possible that a face, deprived of the advantage of sight, could have expressed character so strongly; but her eyes, which were almost totally closed, did not, by the display of their sightless orbs, mar the countenance to which they could add nothing. She seemed in a ruminating posture, soothed, perhaps, by the murmurs of the busy tribe around her, to abstraction, though not to slumber.

Lucy undid the latch of the little garden gate, and solicited the old woman's attention. "My father, Alice, is come to see you."

"He is welcome, Miss Ashton, and so are you," said the old woman, turning and inclining her head towards her visitors.

"This is a fine morning for your bee-hives, mother," said the Lord Keeper, who, struck with the outward appearance of Alice, was somewhat curious to know if her conversation would correspond with it.

"I believe so, my lord," she replied; "I feel the air breathe milder than of late."

"You do not," resumed the statesman, "take charge of these bees yourself, mother? — How do you manage them?"

"By delegates, as kings do their subjects," resumed Alice; "and I am fortunate in a prime minister — Here, Babie."

She whistled on a small silver call which hung around her neck, and which at that time was sometimes used to summon domestics, and Babie, a girl of fifteen, made her appearance from the hut, not altogether so cleanly arrayed as she would probably have been had Alice had the use of her eyes, but with a greater air of neatness than was upon the whole to have been expected.

"Babie," said her mistress, "offer some bread and honey to the Lord Keeper and Miss Ashton — they will excuse your awkwardness, if you use cleanliness and dispatch."

Babie performed her mistress's command with the grace which was naturally to have been expected, moving to and fro with a lobster-like gesture, her feet and legs tending one way, while her head, turned in a different direction, was fixed in wonder upon the laird, who was more frequently heard of than seen by his tenants and dependents. The bread and honey, however, deposited on a plantain leaf, was offered and accepted in all due courtesy. The Lord Keeper, still retaining the place which

he had occupied on the decayed trunk of a fallen tree, looked as if he wished to prolong the interview, but was at a loss how to introduce a suitable subject.

"You have been long a resident on this property?" he said, after a pause.

"It is now nearly sixty years since I first knew Ravenswood," answered the old dame, whose conversation, though perfectly civil and respectful, seemed cautiously limited to the unavoidable and necessary task of replying to Sir William.

"You are not, I should judge by your accent, of this country originally?" said the Lord Keeper, in continuation.

"No; I am by birth an Englishwoman."

"Yet you seem attached to this country as if it were your own."

"It is here," replied the blind woman, "that I have drank the cup of joy and of sorrow which Heaven destined for me. I was here the wife of an upright and affectionate husband for more than twenty years — I was here the mother of six promising children — it was here that God deprived me of all these blessings — it was here they died, and yonder, by yon ruined chapel, they lie all buried — I had no country but theirs while they lived — I have none but theirs now they are no more."

"But your house," said the Lord Keeper, looking at it, "is miserably ruinous?"

"Do, my dear father," said Lucy, eagerly, yet bashfully, catching at the hint, "give orders to make it better,— that is, if you think it proper."

"It will last my time, my dear Miss Lucy," said the blind woman; "I would not have my lord give himself the least trouble about it."

"But," said Lucy, "you once had a much better house, and were rich, and now in your old age to live in this hovel!"

"It is as good as I deserve, Miss Lucy; if my heart has not broke with what I have suffered, and seen others suffer, it must have been strong enough, and the rest of this old frame has no right to call itself weaker."

"You have probably witnessed many changes," said the Lord Keeper; "but your experience must have taught you to expect them."

"It has taught me to endure them, my lord," was the reply.

"Yet you knew that they must needs arrive in the course of years?" said the statesman.

"Ay; as I know that the stump, on or beside which you sit, once a tall and lofty tree, must needs one day fall by decay, or by the axe; yet I hoped my eyes might not witness the downfall of the tree which overshadowed my dwelling."

"Do not suppose," said the Lord Keeper, "that you will lose any interest with me, for looking back with regret to the days when another family possessed my estates. You had reason, doubtless, to love them, and I respect your gratitude. I will order some repairs in your cottage, and I hope we shall live to be friends when we know each other better."

"Those of my age," returned the dame, "make no new friends. I thank you for your bounty — it is well intended undoubtedly; but I have all I want, and I cannot accept more at your lordship's hands."

"Well, then," continued the Lord Keeper, "at least allow me to say, that I look upon you as a

woman of sense and education beyond your appearance, and that I hope you will continue to reside on this property of mine rent-free for your life."

"I hope I shall," said the old dame, composedly; "I believe that was made an article in the sale of Ravenswood to your lordship, though such a trifling circumstance may have escaped your recollection."

"I remember — I recollect," said his lordship, somewhat confused. "I perceive you are too much attached to your old friends to accept any benefit from their successor."

"Far from it, my lord; I am grateful for the benefits which I decline, and I wish I could pay you for offering them, better than what I am now about to say." The Lord Keeper looked at her in some surprise, but said not a word. "My lord," she continued, in an impressive and solemn tone, "take care what you do; you are on the brink of a precipice."

"Indeed?" said the Lord Keeper, his mind reverting to the political circumstances of the country. "Has any thing come to your knowledge — any plot or conspiracy?"

"No, my lord; those who traffic in such commodities do not call into their councils the old, blind, and infirm. My warning is of another kind. You have driven matters hard with the house of Ravenswood. Believe a true tale — they are a fierce house, and there is danger in dealing with men when they become desperate."

"Tush," answered the Keeper; "what has been between us has been the work of the law, not my doing; and to the law they must look, if they would impugn my proceedings."

"Ay, but they may think otherwise, and take the law into their own hand, when they fail of other means of redress."

"What mean you?" said the Lord Keeper. "Young Ravenswood would not have recourse to personal violence?"

"God forbid I should say so! I know nothing of the youth but what is honourable and open — honourable and open, said I?—I should have added, free, generous, noble. But he is still a Ravenswood, and may bide his time. Remember the fate of Sir George Lockhart."[1]

The Lord Keeper started as she called to his recollection a tragedy so deep and so recent. The

[1] President of the Court of Session. He was pistolled in the High Street of Edinburgh, by John Chiesley of Dalry, in the year 1689. The revenge of this desperate man was stimulated by an opinion that he had sustained injustice in a decreet-arbitral pronounced by the President, assigning an alimentary provision of about £93 in favour of his wife and children. He is said at first to have designed to shoot the judge while attending upon divine worship, but was diverted by some feeling concerning the sanctity of the place. After the congregation was dismissed, he dogged his victim as far as the head of the close on the south side of the Lawnmarket, in which the President's house was situated, and shot him dead as he was about to enter it. This act was done in the presence of numerous spectators. The assassin made no attempt to fly, but boasted of the deed, saying, "I have taught the President how to do justice." He had at least given him fair warning, as Jack Cade says on a similar occasion. The murderer, after undergoing the torture, by a special act of the Estates of Parliament, was tried before the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, as high sheriff, and condemned to be dragged on a hurdle to the place of execution, to have his right hand struck off while he yet lived, and, finally, to be hung on the gallows with the pistol wherewith he shot the President tied round his neck. This execution took place on the 3d of April 1689; and the incident was long remembered as a dreadful instance of what the law books call the *perfervidum ingenium Scotorum*.

old woman proceeded: "Chiesley, who did the deed, was a relative of Lord Ravenswood. In the hall of Ravenswood, in my presence, and in that of others, he avowed publicly his determination to do the cruelty which he afterwards committed. I could not keep silence, though to speak it ill became my station. 'You are devising a dreadful crime,' I said, 'for which you must reckon before the judgment-seat.' Never shall I forget his look, as he replied, 'I must reckon then for many things, and will reckon for this also.' Therefore I may well say, beware of pressing a desperate man with the hand of authority. There is blood of Chiesley in the veins of Ravenswood, and one drop of it were enough to fire him in the circumstances in which he is placed —I say, beware of him."

The old dame had, either intentionally or by accident, harped aright the fear of the Lord Keeper. The desperate and dark resource of private assassination, so familiar to a Scottish baron in former times, had even in the present age been too frequently resorted to under the pressure of unusual temptation, or where the mind of the actor was prepared for such a crime. Sir William Ashton was aware of this; as also that young Ravenswood had received injuries sufficient to prompt him to that sort of revenge, which becomes a frequent though fearful consequence of the partial administration of justice. He endeavoured to disguise from Alice the nature of the apprehensions which he entertained; but so ineffectually, that a person even of less penetration than nature had endowed her with must necessarily have been aware that the subject lay near his bosom. His voice was changed in its accent as he replied to her, that the Master of Ravens-

wood was a man of honour; and, were it otherwise, that the fate of Chiesley of Dalry was a sufficient warning to any one who should dare to assume the office of avenger of his own imaginary wrongs. And having hastily uttered these expressions, he rose and left the place without waiting for a reply.

CHAPTER V.

——— Is she a Capulet ?
O dear account ! my life is my foe's debt.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE Lord Keeper walked for nearly a quarter of a mile in profound silence. His daughter, naturally timid, and bred up in those ideas of filial awe and implicit obedience which were inculcated upon the youth of that period, did not venture to interrupt his meditations.

"Why do you look so pale, Lucy ?" said her father, turning suddenly round and breaking silence.

According to the ideas of the time, which did not permit a young woman to offer her sentiments on any subject of importance unless especially required to do so, Lucy was bound to appear ignorant of the meaning of all that had passed betwixt Alice and her father, and imputed the emotion he had observed to the fear of the wild cattle which grazed in that part of the extensive chase through which they were now walking.

Of these animals, the descendants of the savage herds which anciently roamed free in the Caledonian forests, it was formerly a point of state to preserve a few in the parks of the Scottish nobility. Specimens continued within the memory of man to be kept at least at three houses of distinction, Hamilton namely, Drumlanrick, and Cumbernauld. They had degenerated from the ancient race in size and

strength, if we are to judge from the accounts of old chronicles, and from the formidable remains frequently discovered in bogs and morasses when drained and laid open. The bull had lost the shaggy honours of his mane, and the race was small and light made, in colour a dingy white, or rather a pale yellow, with black horns and hoofs. They retained, however, in some measure, the ferocity of their ancestry, could not be domesticated on account of their antipathy to the human race, and were often dangerous if approached unguardedly, or wantonly disturbed. It was this last reason which has occasioned their being extirpated at the places we have mentioned, where probably they would otherwise have been retained as appropriate inhabitants of a Scottish woodland, and fit tenants for a baronial forest. A few, if I mistake not, are still preserved at Chillingham Castle, in Northumberland, the seat of the Earl of Tankerville.

It was to her finding herself in the vicinity of a group of three or four of these animals, that Lucy thought proper to impute those signs of fear, which had arisen in her countenance for a different reason. For she had been familiarized with the appearance of the wild cattle, during her walks in the chase; and it was not then, as it may be now, a necessary part of a young lady's demeanour, to indulge in causeless tremors of the nerves. On the present occasion, however, she speedily found cause for real terror.

Lucy had scarcely replied to her father in the words we have mentioned, and he was just about to rebuke her supposed timidity, when a bull, stimulated either by the scarlet colour of Miss Ashton's mantle, or by one of those fits of capricious ferocity

to which their dispositions are liable, detached himself suddenly from the group which was feeding at the upper extremity of a grassy glade, that seemed to lose itself among the crossing and entangled boughs. The animal approached the intruders on his pasture ground, at first slowly, pawing the ground with his hoof, bellowing from time to time, and tearing up the sand with his horns, as if to lash himself up to rage and violence.

The Lord Keeper, who observed the animal's demeanour, was aware that he was about to become mischievous, and, drawing his daughter's arm under his own, began to walk fast along the avenue, in hopes to get out of his sight and his reach. This was the most injudicious course he could have adopted, for, encouraged by the appearance of flight, the bull began to pursue them at full speed. Assailed by a danger so imminent, firmer courage than that of the Lord Keeper might have given way. But paternal tenderness, "love strong as death," sustained him. He continued to support and drag onward his daughter, until, her fears altogether depriving her of the power of flight, she sunk down by his side; and when he could no longer assist her to escape, he turned round and placed himself betwixt her and the raging animal, which advancing in full career, its brutal fury enhanced by the rapidity of the pursuit, was now within a few yards of them. The Lord Keeper had no weapons; his age and gravity dispensed even with the usual appendage of a walking sword,—could such appendage have availed him any thing.

It seemed inevitable that the father or daughter, or both, should have fallen victims to the impending danger, when a shot from the neighbouring

thicket arrested the progress of the animal. He was so truly struck between the junction of the spine with the skull, that the wound, which in any other part of his body might scarce have impeded his career, proved instantly fatal. Stumbling forward with a hideous bellow, the progressive force of his previous motion, rather than any operation of his limbs, carried him up to within three yards of the astonished Lord Keeper, where he rolled on the ground, his limbs darkened with the black death-sweat, and quivering with the last convulsions of muscular motion.

Lucy lay senseless on the ground, insensible of the wonderful deliverance which she had experienced. Her father was almost equally stupified, so rapid and unexpected had been the transition from the horrid death which seemed inevitable, to perfect security. He gazed on the animal, terrible even in death, with a species of mute and confused astonishment, which did not permit him distinctly to understand what had taken place; and so inaccurate was his consciousness of what had passed, that he might have supposed the bull had been arrested in its career by a thunderbolt, had he not observed among the branches of the thicket the figure of a man, with a short gun or musquetoon in his hand.

This instantly recalled him to a sense of their situation — a glance at his daughter reminded him of the necessity of procuring her assistance. He called to the man, whom he concluded to be one of his foresters, to give immediate attention to Miss Ashton, while he himself hastened to call assistance. The huntsman approached them accordingly, and the Lord Keeper saw he was a stranger, but

was too much agitated to make any farther remarks. In a few hurried words, he directed the shooter, as stronger and more active than himself, to carry the young lady to a neighbouring fountain, while he went back to Alice's hut to procure more aid.

The man to whose timely interference they had been so much indebted, did not seem inclined to leave his good work half finished. He raised Lucy from the ground in his arms, and conveying her through the glades of the forest by paths with which he seemed well acquainted, stopped not until he laid her in safety by the side of a plentiful and pellucid fountain, which had been once covered in, screened and decorated with architectural ornaments of a Gothic character. But now the vault which had covered it being broken down and riven, and the Gothic font ruined and demolished, the stream burst forth from the recess of the earth in open day, and winded its way among the broken sculpture and moss-grown stones which lay in confusion around its source.

Tradition, always busy, at least in Scotland, to grace with a legendary tale a spot in itself interesting, had ascribed a cause of peculiar veneration to this fountain. A beautiful young lady met one of the Lords of Ravenswood while hunting near this spot, and, like a second Egeria, had captivated the affections of the feudal Numa. They met frequently afterwards, and always at sunset, the charms of the nymph's mind completing the conquest which her beauty had begun, and the mystery of the intrigue adding zest to both. She always appeared and disappeared close by the fountain, with which, therefore, her lover judged she had some inexpli-

cable connexion. She placed certain restrictions on their intercourse, which also savoured of mystery. They met only once a week — Friday was the appointed day — and she explained to the Lord of Ravenswood, that they were under the necessity of separating so soon as the bell of a chapel, belonging to a hermitage in the adjoining wood, now long ruinous, should toll the hour of vespers. In the course of his confession, the Baron of Ravenswood intrusted the hermit with the secret of this singular amour, and Father Zachary drew the necessary and obvious consequence, that his patron was enveloped in the toils of Satan, and in danger of destruction, both to body and soul. He urged these perils to the Baron with all the force of monkish rhetoric, and described, in the most frightful colours, the real character and person of the apparently lovely Naiad, whom he hesitated not to denounce as a limb of the kingdom of darkness. The lover listened with obstinate incredulity; and it was not until worn out by the obstinacy of the anchoret, that he consented to put the state and condition of his mistress to a certain trial, and for that purpose acquiesced in Zachary's proposal, that on their next interview the vespers bell should be rung half an hour later than usual. The hermit maintained and bucklered his opinion, by quotations from *Malleus Malificarum*, *Sprengerus*, *Remigius*, and other learned demonologists, that the Evil One, thus seduced to remain behind the appointed hour, would assume her true shape, and, having appeared to her terrified lover as a fiend of hell. would vanish from him in a flash of sulphurous lightning. Raymond of Ravenswood acquiesced in the experiment, not incurious concerning the issue,

though confident it would disappoint the expectations of the hermit.

At the appointed hour the lovers met, and their interview was protracted beyond that at which they usually parted, by the delay of the priest to ring his usual curfew. No change took place upon the nymph's outward form; but as soon as the lengthening shadows made her aware that the usual hour of the vespers chime was passed, she tore herself from her lover's arms with a shriek of despair, bid him adieu for ever, and, plunging into the fountain, disappeared from his eyes. The bubbles occasioned by her descent were crimsoned with blood as they arose, leading the distracted Baron to infer, that his ill-judged curiosity had occasioned the death of this interesting and mysterious being. The remorse which he felt, as well as the recollection of her charms, proved the penance of his future life, which he lost in the battle of Flodden not many months after. But, in memory of his Naiad, he had previously ornamented the fountain in which she appeared to reside, and secured its waters from profanation or pollution, by the small vaulted building of which the fragments still remained scattered around it. From this period the house of Ravenswood was supposed to have dated its decay.

Such was the generally received legend, which some, who would seem wiser than the vulgar, explained, as obscurely intimating the fate of a beautiful maid of plebeian rank, the mistress of this Raymond, whom he slew in a fit of jealousy, and whose blood was mingled with the waters of the locked fountain, as it was commonly called. Others imagined that the tale had a more remote origin in the ancient heathen mythology. All however

agreed, that the spot was fatal to the Ravenswood family; and that to drink of the waters of the well, or even approach its brink, was as ominous to a descendant of that house, as for a Grahame to wear green, a Bruce to kill a spider, or a St. Clair to cross the Ord on a Monday. (*h*)

It was on this ominous spot that Lucy Ashton first drew breath after her long and almost deadly swoon. Beautiful and pale as the fabulous Naiad in the last agony of separation from her lover, she was seated so as to rest with her back against a part of the ruined wall, while her mantle, dripping with the water which her protector had used profusely to recall her senses, clung to her slender and beautifully proportioned form.

The first moment of recollection brought to her mind the danger which had overpowered her senses — the next called to remembrance that of her father. She looked around — he was nowhere to be seen — "My father — my father!" was all that she could ejaculate.

"Sir William is safe," answered the voice of a stranger — "perfectly safe, and will be with you instantly."

"Are you sure of that?" exclaimed Lucy — "the bull was close by us — do not stop me — I must go to seek my father!"

And she arose with that purpose; but her strength was so much exhausted, that, far from possessing the power to execute her purpose, she must have fallen against the stone on which she had leant, probably not without sustaining serious injury.

The stranger was so near to her, that, without actually suffering her to fall, he could not avoid

catching her in his arms, which, however, he did with a momentary reluctance, very unusual when youth interposes to prevent beauty from danger. It seemed as if her weight, slight as it was, proved too heavy for her young and athletic assistant, for, without feeling the temptation of detaining her in his arms even for a single instant, he again placed her on the stone from which she had risen, and retreating a few steps, repeated hastily, "Sir William Ashton is perfectly safe, and will be here instantly. Do not make yourself anxious on his account — Fate has singularly preserved him. You, madam, are exhausted, and must not think of rising until you have some assistance more suitable than mine."

Lucy, whose senses were by this time more effectually collected, was naturally led to look at the stranger with attention. There was nothing in his appearance which should have rendered him unwilling to offer his arm to a young lady who required support, or which could have induced her to refuse his assistance; and she could not help thinking, even in that moment, that he seemed cold and reluctant to offer it. A shooting-dress of dark cloth intimated the rank of the wearer, though concealed in part by a large and loose cloak of a dark brown colour. A Montero cap and a black feather drooped over the wearer's brow, and partly concealed his features, which, so far as seen, were dark, regular, and full of majestic, though somewhat sullen, expression. Some secret sorrow, or the brooding spirit of some moody passion, had quenched the light and ingenuous vivacity of youth in a countenance singularly fitted to display both, and it was not easy to gaze on the stranger without a secret

impression either of pity or awe, or at least of doubt and curiosity allied to both.

The impression which we have necessarily been long in describing, Lucy felt in the glance of a moment, and had no sooner encountered the keen black eyes of the stranger, than her own were bent on the ground with a mixture of bashful embarrassment and fear. Yet there was a necessity to speak, or at least she thought so, and in a fluttered accent she began to mention her wonderful escape, in which she was sure that the stranger must, under Heaven, have been her father's protector, and her own.

He seemed to shrink from her expressions of gratitude, while he replied abruptly, "I leave you, madam," — the deep melody of his voice rendered powerful, but not harsh, by something like a severity of tone — "I leave you to the protection of those to whom it is possible you may have this day been a guardian angel."

Lucy was surprised at the ambiguity of his language, and, with a feeling of artless and unaffected gratitude, began to deprecate the idea of having intended to give her deliverer any offence, as if such a thing had been possible. "I have been unfortunate," she said, "in endeavouring to express my thanks — I am sure it must be so, though I cannot recollect what I said — but would you but stay till my father — till the Lord Keeper comes — would you only permit him to pay you his thanks, and to enquire your name?"

"My name is unnecessary," answered the stranger; "your father — I would rather say Sir William Ashton — will learn it soon enough, for all the pleasure it is likely to afford him."

"You mistake him," said Lucy earnestly; "he will be grateful for my sake and for his own. You do not know my father, or you are deceiving me with a story of his safety, when he has already fallen a victim to the fury of that animal."

When she had caught this idea, she started from the ground, and endeavoured to press towards the avenue in which the accident had taken place, while the stranger, though he seemed to hesitate between the desire to assist and the wish to leave her, was obliged, in common humanity, to oppose her both by entreaty and action.

"On the word of a gentleman, madam, I tell you the truth; your father is in perfect safety; you will expose yourself to injury if you venture back where the herd of wild cattle grazed. — If you will go" — for, having once adopted the idea that her father was still in danger, she pressed forward in spite of him — "If you *will* go, accept my arm, though I am not perhaps the person who can with most propriety offer you support."

But, without heeding this intimation, Lucy took him at his word. "O if you be a man," she said, — "if you be a gentleman, assist me to find my father! You shall not leave me — you must go with me — he is dying perhaps while we are talking here!"

Then, without listening to excuse or apology, and holding fast by the stranger's arm, though unconscious of any thing save the support which it gave, and without which she could not have moved, mixed with a vague feeling of preventing his escape from her, she was urging, and almost dragging him forward, when Sir William Ashton came up, followed by the female attendant of blind Alice, and

by two wood-cutters, whom he had summoned from their occupation to his assistance. His joy at seeing his daughter safe, overcame the surprise with which he would at another time have beheld her hanging as familiarly on the arm of a stranger, as she might have done upon his own.

"Lucy, my dear Lucy, are you safe? — are you well?" were the only words that broke from him as he embraced her in ecstasy.

"I am well, sir, thank God! and still more that I see you so; — but this gentleman," she said, quitting his arm, and shrinking from him, "what must he think of me?" and her eloquent blood, flushing over neck and brow, spoke how much she was ashamed of the freedom with which she had craved, and even compelled his assistance.

"This gentleman," said Sir William Ashton, "will, I trust, not regret the trouble we have given him, when I assure him of the gratitude of the Lord Keeper for the greatest service which one man ever rendered to another — for the life of my child — for my own life, which he has saved by his bravery and presence of mind. He will, I am sure, permit us to request" ——

"Request nothing of ME, my lord," said the stranger, in a stern and peremptory tone; "I am the Master of Ravenswood."

There was a dead pause of surprise, not unmixed with less pleasant feelings. The Master wrapt himself in his cloak, made a haughty inclination towards Lucy, muttering a few words of courtesy, as indistinctly heard as they seemed to be reluctantly uttered, and, turning from them, was immediately lost in the thicket.

"The Master of Ravenswood!" said the Lord

Keeper, when he had recovered his momentary astonishment — "Hasten after him — stop him — beg him to speak to me for a single moment."

The two foresters accordingly set off in pursuit of the stranger. They speedily reappeared, and, in an embarrassed and awkward manner, said the gentleman would not return. The Lord Keeper took one of the fellows aside, and questioned him more closely what the Master of Ravenswood had said.

"He just said he wadna come back," said the man, with the caution of a prudent Scotchman, who cared not to be the bearer of an unpleasant errand.

"He said something more, sir," said the Lord Keeper, "and I insist on knowing what it was."

"Why, then, my lord," said the man, looking down, "he said — But it wad be nae pleasure to your lordship to hear it, for I daresay the Master meant nae ill."

"That's none of your concern, sir; I desire to hear the very words."

"Weel, then," replied the man, "he said, Tell Sir William Ashton, that the next time he and I forgather, he will not be half sae blithe of our meeting as of our parting."

"Very well, sir," said the Lord Keeper, "I believe he alludes to a wager we have on our hawks — it is a matter of no consequence."

He turned to his daughter, who was by this time so much recovered as to be able to walk home. But the effect which the various recollections, connected with a scene so terrific, made upon a mind which was susceptible in an extreme degree, was more permanent than the injury which her nerves had sustained. Visions of terror, both in sleep and in waking reveries, recalled to her the form of the

furious animal, and the dreadful bellow with which he accompanied his career; and it was always the image of the Master of Ravenswood, with his native nobleness of countenance and form, that seemed to interpose betwixt her and assured death. It is, perhaps, at all times dangerous for a young person to suffer recollection to dwell repeatedly, and with too much complacency, on the same individual; but in Lucy's situation it was almost unavoidable. She had never happened to see a young man of mien and features so romantic and so striking as young Ravenswood; but had she seen an hundred his equals or his superiors in those particulars, no one else could have been linked to her heart by the strong associations of remembered danger and escape, of gratitude, wonder, and curiosity. I say curiosity, for it is likely that the singularly restrained and unaccommodating manners of the Master of Ravenswood, so much at variance with the natural expression of his features and grace of his deportment, as they excited wonder by the contrast, had their effect in riveting her attention to the recollection. She knew little of Ravenswood, or the disputes which had existed betwixt her father and his, and perhaps could in her gentleness of mind hardly have comprehended the angry and bitter passions which they had engendered. But she knew that he was come of noble stem; was poor, though descended from the noble and the wealthy; and she felt that she could sympathise with the feelings of a proud mind, which urged him to recoil from the proffered gratitude of the new proprietors of his father's house and domains. Would he have equally shunned their acknowledgments and avoided their intimacy, had her father's request been urged

more mildly, less abruptly, and softened with the grace which women so well know how to throw into their manner, when they mean to mediate betwixt the headlong passions of the ruder sex? This was a perilous question to ask her own mind — perilous both in the idea and in its consequences.

Lucy Ashton, in short, was involved in those mazes of the imagination which are most dangerous to the young and the sensitive. Time, it is true, absence, change of scene and new faces, might probably have destroyed the illusion in her instance as it has done in many others; but her residence remained solitary, and her mind without those means of dissipating her pleasing visions. This solitude was chiefly owing to the absence of Lady Ashton, who was at this time in Edinburgh, watching the progress of some state-intrigue; the Lord Keeper only received society out of policy or ostentation, and was by nature rather reserved and unsociable; and thus no cavalier appeared to rival or to obscure the ideal picture of chivalrous excellence which Lucy had pictured to herself in the Master of Ravenswood.

While Lucy indulged in these dreams, she made frequent visits to old blind Alice, hoping it would be easy to lead her to talk on the subject, which at present she had so imprudently admitted to occupy so large a portion of her thoughts. But Alice did not in this particular gratify her wishes and expectations. She spoke readily, and with pathetic feeling, concerning the family in general, but seemed to observe an especial and cautious silence on the subject of the present representative. The little she said of him was not altogether so favourable as Lucy had anticipated. She hinted that he

was of a stern and unforgiving character, more ready to resent than to pardon injuries; and Lucy combined with great alarm the hints which she now dropped of these dangerous qualities, with Alice's advice to her father, so emphatically given, "to beware of Ravenswood."

But that very Ravenswood, of whom such unjust suspicions had been entertained, had, almost immediately after they had been uttered, confuted them, by saving at once her father's life and her own. Had he nourished such black revenge as Alice's dark hints seemed to indicate, no deed of active guilt was necessary to the full gratification of that evil passion. He needed but to have withheld for an instant his indispensable and effective assistance, and the object of his resentment must have perished, without any direct aggression on his part, by a death equally fearful and certain. She conceived, therefore, that some secret prejudice, or the suspicions incident to age and misfortune, had led Alice to form conclusions injurious to the character, and irreconcilable both with the generous conduct and noble features of the Master of Ravenswood. And in this belief Lucy reposed her hope, and went on weaving her enchanted web of fairy tissue, as beautiful and transient as the film of the gossamer, when it is pearled with the morning dew, and glimmering to the sun.

Her father, in the meanwhile, as well as the Master of Ravenswood, were making reflections, as frequent though more solid than those of Lucy, upon the singular event which had taken place. The Lord Keeper's first task, when he returned home, was to ascertain by medical advice that his daughter had sustained no injury from the dangerous and

alarming situation in which she had been placed. Satisfied on this topic, he proceeded to revise the memoranda which he had taken down from the mouth of the person employed to interrupt the funeral service of the late Lord Ravenswood. Bred to casuistry, and well accustomed to practise the ambidexter ingenuity of the bar, it cost him little trouble to soften the features of the tumult which he had been at first so anxious to exaggerate. He preached to his colleagues of the Privy Council the necessity of using conciliatory measures with young men, whose blood and temper were hot, and their experience of life limited. He did not hesitate to attribute some censure to the conduct of the officer, as having been unnecessarily irritating.

These were the contents of his public dispatches. The letters which he wrote to those private friends into whose management the matter was likely to fall, were of a yet more favourable tenor. He represented that lenity in this case would be equally politic and popular, whereas, considering the high respect with which the rites of interment are regarded in Scotland, any severity exercised against the Master of Ravenswood for protecting those of his father from interruption, would be on all sides most unfavourably construed. And, finally, assuming the language of a generous and high-spirited man, he made it his particular request that this affair should be passed over without severe notice. He alluded with delicacy to the predicament in which he himself stood with young Ravenswood, as having succeeded in the long train of litigation by which the fortunes of that noble house had been so much reduced, and confessed it would be most peculiarly acceptable to his own feelings.

could he find means in some sort to counterbalance the disadvantages which he had occasioned the family, though only in the prosecution of his just and lawful rights. He therefore made it his particular and personal request that the matter should have no farther consequences, and insinuated a desire that he himself should have the merit of having put a stop to it by his favourable report and intercession. It was particularly remarkable, that, contrary to his uniform practice, he made no special communication to Lady Ashton upon the subject of the tumult; and although he mentioned the alarm which Lucy had received from one of the wild cattle, yet he gave no detailed account of an incident so interesting and terrible.

There was much surprise among Sir William Ashton's political friends and colleagues on receiving letters of a tenor so unexpected. On comparing notes together, one smiled, one put up his eyebrows, a third nodded acquiescence in the general wonder, and a fourth asked, if they were sure these were *all* the letters the Lord Keeper had written on the subject. "It runs strangely in my mind, my lords, that none of these advices contain the root of the matter."

But no secret letters of a contrary nature had been received, although the question seemed to imply the possibility of their existence.

"Well," said an old grey-headed statesman, who had contrived, by shifting and trimming, to maintain his post at the steerage through all the changes of course which the vessel had held for thirty years, "I thought Sir William would hae verified the auld Scottish saying, 'as soon comes the lamb's skin to market as the auld tup's.'"

"We must please him after his own fashion," said another, "though it be an unlooked-for one."

"A wilful man maun hae his way," answered the old counsellor.

"The Keeper will rue this before year and day are out," said a third; "the Master of Ravenswood is the lad to wind him a pirn."[1]

"Why, what would you do, my lords, with the poor young fellow?" said a noble Marquis present: "the Lord Keeper has got all his estates — he has not a cross to bless himself with."

On which the ancient Lord Turntippet replied,

"'If he hasna gear to fine,
He has shins to pine' —

And that was our way before the Revolution — *Luitur cum persona, qui luere non potest cum crumena*[2] — Hegh, my lords, that's gude law Latin."

"I can see no motive," replied the Marquis, "that any noble lord can have for urging this matter farther; let the Lord Keeper have the power to deal in it as he pleases."

"Agree, agree — remit to the Lord Keeper, with any other person for fashion's sake — Lord Hirplehooly, who is bed-ridden — one to be a quorum — Make your entry in the minutes, Mr. Clerk — And now, my lords, there is that young scattergood, the Laird of Bucklaw's fine to be disponed upon — I suppose it goes to my Lord Treasurer?"

"Shame be in my meal-poke, then," exclaimed Lord Turntippet, "and your hand aye in the nook

[1] *Wind him a pirn*, proverbial for preparing a troublesome business for some person.

[2] *i. e.* Let him pay with his person, who cannot pay with his purse.

of it! I had set that down for a by bit between meals for mysell."

"To use one of your favourite saws, my lord," replied the Marquis, "you are like the miller's dog, that licks his lips before the bag is untied — the man is not fined yet."

"But that costs but twa skarts of a pen," said Lord Turntippet; "and surely there is nae noble lord that will presume to say, that I, wha hae complied wi' a' compliances, tane all manner of tests, abjured all that was to be abjured, and sworn a' that was to be sworn, for these thirty years bypast, sticking fast by my duty to the state through good report and bad report, shouldna hae something now and then to synd my mouth wi' after sic drouthy wark? Eh?"

"It would be very unreasonable indeed, my lord," replied the Marquis, "had we either thought that your lordship's drought was quenchable, or observed any thing stick in your throat that required washing down."

And so we close the scene on the Privy Council of that period.

CHAPTER VI.

For this are all these warriors come,
  To hear an idle tale;
And o'er our death-accustom'd arms
  Shall silly tears prevail?

HENRY MACKENZIE.

ON the evening of the day when the Lord Keeper and his daughter were saved from such imminent peril, two strangers were seated in the most private apartment of a small obscure inn, or rather alehouse, called the Tod's Den, about three or four miles from the Castle of Ravenswood, and as far from the ruinous tower of Wolf's Crag, betwixt which two places it was situated.

One of these strangers was about forty years of age, tall, and thin in the flanks, with an aquiline nose, dark penetrating eyes, and a shrewd but sinister cast of countenance. The other was about fifteen years younger, short, stout, ruddy-faced, and red-haired, with an open, resolute, and cheerful eye, to which careless and fearless freedom, and inward daring, gave fire and expression, notwithstanding its light grey colour. A stoup of wine, (for in those days it was served out from the cask in pewter flagons,) was placed on the table, and each had his quaigh or bicker[1] before him. But there was little

[1] Drinking cups of different sizes, made out of staves hooped together. The *quaigh* was used chiefly for drinking wine or brandy; it might hold about a gill, and was often composed of rare wood, and curiously ornamented with silver.

appearance of conviviality. With folded arms, and looks of anxious expectation, they eyed each other in silence, each wrapt in his own thoughts, and holding no communication with his neighbour.

At length the younger broke silence by exclaiming, "What the foul fiend can detain the Master so long? he must have miscarried in his enterprise. — Why did you dissuade me from going with him?"

"One man is enough to right his own wrong," said the taller and older personage; "we venture our lives for him in coming thus far on such an errand."

"You are but a craven after all, Craigengelt," answered the younger, "and that's what many folk have thought you before now."

"But what none has dared to tell me," said Craigengelt, laying his hand on the hilt of his sword; "and, but that I hold a hasty man no better than a fool, I would" — he paused for his companion's answer.

"*Would* you?" said the other coolly; "and why do you not then?"

Craigengelt drew his cutlass an inch or two, and then returned it with violence into the scabbard — "Because there is a deeper stake to be played for, than the lives of twenty harebrained gowks like you."

"You are right there," said his companion, "for if it were not that these forfeitures, and that last fine that the old driveller Turntippet is gaping for, and which, I daresay, is laid on by this time, have fairly driven me out of house and home, I were a coxcomb and a cuckoo to boot, to trust your fair promises of getting me a commission in the Irish brigade, — what have I to do with the Irish brigade?

I am a plain Scotchman, as my father was before me; and my grand-aunt, Lady Girnington, cannot live for ever."

"Ay, Bucklaw," observed Craigengelt, "but she may live for many a long day; and for your father, he had land and living, kept himself close from wadsetters and money-lenders, paid each man his due, and lived on his own."

"And whose fault is it that I have not done so too?" said Bucklaw — "whose but the devil's and yours, and such like as you, that have led me to the far end of a fair estate? and now I shall be obliged, I suppose, to shelter and shift about like yourself — live one week upon a line of secret intelligence from Saint Germains — another upon a report of a rising in the Highlands — get my breakfast and morning-draught of sack from old Jacobite ladies, and give them locks of my old wig for the Chevalier's hair — second my friend in his quarrel till he comes to the field, and then flinch from him lest so important a political agent should perish from the way. All this I must do for bread, besides calling myself a captain!"

"You think you are making a fine speech now," said Craigengelt, "and showing much wit at my expense. Is starving or hanging better than the life I am obliged to lead, because the present fortunes of the king cannot sufficiently support his envoys?"

"Starving is honester, Craigengelt, and hanging is like to be the end on't — But what you mean to make of this poor fellow Ravenswood, I know not — he has no money left, any more than I — his lands are all pawned and pledged, and the interest eats up the rents, and is not satisfied, and what do you hope to make by meddling in his affairs?"

"Content yourself, Bucklaw; I know my business," replied Craigengelt. "Besides that his name, and his father's services in 1689, will make such an acquisition sound well both at Versailles and Saint Germains — you will also please be informed, that the Master of Ravenswood is a very different kind of a young fellow from you. He has parts and address, as well as courage and talents, and will present himself abroad like a young man of head as well as heart, who knows something more than the speed of a horse or the flight of a hawk. I have lost credit of late, by bringing over no one that had sense to know more than how to unharbour a stag, or take and reclaim an eyess. The Master has education, sense, and penetration."

"And yet is not wise enough to escape the tricks of a kidnapper, Craigengelt?" replied the younger man. "But don't be angry; you know you will not fight, and so it is as well to leave your hilt in peace and quiet, and tell me in sober guise how you drew the Master into your confidence?"

"By flattering his love of vengeance, Bucklaw," answered Craigengelt. "He has always distrusted me, but I watched my time, and struck while his temper was red-hot with the sense of insult and of wrong. He goes now to expostulate, as he says, and perhaps thinks, with Sir William Ashton. I say, that if they meet, and the lawyer puts him to his defence, the Master will kill him; for he had that sparkle in his eye which never deceives you when you would read a man's purpose. At any rate, he will give him such a bullying as will be construed into an assault on a privy-councillor; so there will be a total breach betwixt him and government; Scotland will be too hot for him, France

will gain him, and we will all set sail together in the French brig L'Espoir, which is hovering for us off Eyemouth."

"Content am I," said Bucklaw; "Scotland has little left that I care about; and if carrying the Master with us will get us a better reception in France, why, so be it, in God's name. I doubt our own merits will procure us slender preferment; and I trust he will send a ball through the Keeper's head before he joins us. One or two of these scoundrel statesmen should be shot once a-year, just to keep the others on their good behaviour."

"That is very true," replied Craigengelt; "and it reminds me that I must go and see that our horses have been fed, and are in readiness; for, should such deed be done, it will be no time for grass to grow beneath their heels." He proceeded as far as the door, then turned back with a look of earnestness, and said to Bucklaw, "Whatever should come of this business, I am sure you will do me the justice to remember, that I said nothing to the Master which could imply my accession to any act of violence which he may take it into his head to commit."

"No, no, not a single word like accession," replied Bucklaw; "you know too well the risk belonging to these two terrible words, art and part." Then, as if to himself, he recited the following lines:

> "The dial spoke not, but it made shrewd signs,
> And pointed full upon the stroke of murder."

"What is that you are talking to yourself?" said Craigengelt, turning back with some anxiety.

"Nothing — only two lines I have heard upon the stage," replied his companion.

"Bucklaw," said Craigengelt, "I sometimes think you should have been a stage-player yourself; all is fancy and frolic with you."

"I have often thought so myself," said Bucklaw. "I believe it would be safer than acting with you in the Fatal Conspiracy. — But away, play your own part, and look after the horses like a groom as you are. — A play-actor — a stage-player!" he repeated to himself; "that would have deserved a stab, but that Craigengelt's a coward — And yet I should like the profession well enough —Stay — let me see — ay —I would come out in Alexander —

> 'Thus from the grave I rise to save my love,
> Draw all your swords, and quick as lightning move;
> When I rush on, sure none will dare to stay,
> 'T is love commands, and glory leads the way.'"

As with a voice of thunder, and his hand upon his sword, Bucklaw repeated the ranting couplets of poor Lee, (*i*) Craigengelt re-entered with a face of alarm.

"We are undone, Bucklaw! the Master's led horse has cast himself over his halter in the stable, and is dead lame — his hackney will be set up with the day's work, and now he has no fresh horse; he will never get off."

"Egad, there will be no moving with the speed of lightning this bout," said Bucklaw, drily. "But stay, you can give him yours."

"What! and be taken myself? I thank you for the proposal," said Craigengelt.

"Why," replied Bucklaw, "if the Lord Keeper should have met with a mischance, which for my

part I cannot suppose, for the Master is not the lad to shoot an old and unarmed man — but *if* there should have been a fray at the Castle, you are neither art nor part in it, you know, so have nothing to fear."

"True, true," answered the other, with embarrassment; "but consider my commission from Saint Germains."

"Which many men think is a commission of your own making, noble captain. — Well, if you will not give him your horse, why, d—n it, he must have mine."

"Yours?" said Craigengelt.

"Ay, mine," repeated Bucklaw; "it shall never be said that I agreed to back a gentleman in a little affair of honour, and neither helped him on with it nor off from it."

"You will give him your horse? and have you considered the loss?"

"Loss! why, Grey Gilbert cost me twenty Jacobuses, that's true; but then his hackney is worth something, and his black Moor is worth twice as much were he sound, and I know how to handle him. Take a fat sucking mastiff whelp, flay and bowel him, stuff the body full of black and grey snails, roast a reasonable time, and baste with oil of spikenard, saffron, cinnamon and honey, anoint with the dripping, working it in" ——

"Yes, Bucklaw; but in the meanwhile, before the sprain is cured, nay, before the whelp is roasted, you will be caught and hung. Depend on it, the chase will be hard after Ravenswood. I wish we had made our place of rendezvous nearer to the coast."

"On my faith, then," said Bucklaw, "I had best

go off just now, and leave my horse for him — Stay, stay, he comes, I hear a horse's feet."

"Are you sure there is only one?" said Craigengelt; "I fear there is a chase; I think I hear three or four galloping together — I am sure I hear more horses than one."

"Pooh, pooh, it is the wench of the house clattering to the well in her pattens. By my faith, Captain, you should give up both your captainship and your secret service, for you are as easily scared as a wild-goose. But here comes the Master alone, and looking as gloomy as a night in November."

The Master of Ravenswood entered the room accordingly, his cloak muffled around him, his arms folded, his looks stern, and at the same time dejected. He flung his cloak from him as he entered, threw himself upon a chair, and appeared sunk in a profound reverie.

"What has happened? What have you done?" was hastily demanded by Craigengelt and Bucklaw in the same moment.

"Nothing," was the short and sullen answer.

"Nothing? and left us, determined to call the old villain to account for all the injuries that you, we, and the country, have received at his hand? Have you seen him?"

"I have," replied the Master of Ravenswood.

"Seen him? and come away without settling scores which have been so long due?" said Bucklaw; "I would not have expected that at the hand of the Master of Ravenswood."

"No matter what you expected," replied Ravenswood; "it is not to you, sir, that I shall be disposed to render any reason for my conduct."

"Patience, Bucklaw," said Craigengelt, interrupt-

ing his companion, who seemed about to make an angry reply. "The Master has been interrupted in his purpose by some accident; but he must excuse the anxious curiosity of friends, who are devoted to his cause like you and me."

"Friends, Captain Craigengelt!" retorted Ravenswood, haughtily; "I am ignorant what familiarity has passed betwixt us to entitle you to use that expression. I think our friendship amounts to this, that we agreed to leave Scotland together so soon as I should have visited the alienated mansion of my fathers, and had an interview with its present possessor, I will not call him proprietor."

"Very true, Master," answered Bucklaw; "and as we thought you had a mind to do something to put your neck in jeopardy, Craigie and I very courteously agreed to tarry for you, although ours might run some risk in consequence. As to Craigie, indeed, it does not very much signify, he had gallows written on his brow in the hour of his birth; but I should not like to discredit my parentage by coming to such an end in another man's cause."

"Gentlemen," said the Master of Ravenswood, "I am sorry if I have occasioned you any inconvenience, but I must claim the right of judging what is best for my own affairs, without rendering explanations to any one. I have altered my mind, and do not design to leave the country this season."

"Not to leave the country, Master!" exclaimed Craigengelt. "Not to go over, after all the trouble and expense I have incurred — after all the risk of discovery, and the expense of freight and demurrage!"

"Sir," replied the Master of Ravenswood, "when I designed to leave this country in this haste, I

made use of your obliging offer to procure me means of conveyance; but I do not recollect that I pledged myself to go off, if I found occasion to alter my mind. For your trouble on my account, I am sorry, and I thank you; your expense," he added, putting his hand into his pocket, "admits a more solid compensation — freight and demurrage are matters with which I am unacquainted, Captain Craigengelt, but take my purse and pay yourself according to your own conscience." And accordingly he tendered a purse with some gold in it to the soi-disant captain.

But here Bucklaw interposed in his turn. "Your fingers, Craigie, seem to itch for that same piece of green net-work," said he; "but I make my vow to God, that if they offer to close upon it, I will chop them off with my whinger. Since the Master has changed his mind, I suppose we need stay here no longer; but in the first place I beg leave to tell him" ——

"Tell him any thing you will," said Craigengelt, "if you will first allow me to state the inconveniences to which he will expose himself by quitting our society, to remind him of the obstacles to his remaining here, and of the difficulties attending his proper introduction at Versailles and Saint Germains, without the countenance of those who have established useful connexions."

"Besides forfeiting the friendship," said Bucklaw, "of at least one man of spirit and honour."

"Gentlemen," said Ravenswood, "permit me once more to assure you, that you have been pleased to attach to our temporary connexion more importance than I ever meant that it should have. When I repair to foreign courts, I shall not need the introduction of an intriguing adventurer, nor is

it necessary for me to set value on the friendship of a hot-headed bully." With these words, and without waiting for an answer, he left the apartment, remounted his horse, and was heard to ride off.

"Mortbleu!" said Captain Craigengelt, "my recruit is lost!"

"Ay, Captain," said Bucklaw, "the salmon is off with hook and all. But I will after him, for I have had more of his insolence than I can well digest."

Craigengelt offered to accompany him; but Bucklaw replied, "No, no, Captain, keep you the cheek of the chimney-nook till I come back; it's good sleeping in a haill skin.

> 'Little kens the auld wife that sits by the fire,
> How cauld the wind blaws in hurle-burle swire.'"

And singing as he went, he left the apartment.

CHAPTER VII.

> Now, Billy Bewick, keep good heart,
> And of thy talking let me be;
> But if thou art a man, as I am sure thou art,
> Come over the dike and fight with me.
>
> *Old Ballad.*

THE Master of Ravenswood had mounted the ambling hackney which he before rode, on finding the accident which had happened to his led horse, and, for the animal's ease, was proceeding at a slow pace from the Tod's Den towards his old tower of Wolf's Crag, when he heard the galloping of a horse behind him, and, looking back, perceived that he was pursued by young Bucklaw, who had been delayed a few minutes in the pursuit by the irresistible temptation of giving the hostler at the Tod's Den some recipe for treating the lame horse. This brief delay he had made up by hard galloping, and now overtook the Master where the road traversed a waste moor. "Halt, sir," cried Bucklaw; "I am no political agent — no Captain Craigengelt, whose life is too important to be hazarded in defence of his honour. I am Frank Hayston of Bucklaw, and no man injures me by word, deed, sign, or look, but he must render me an account of it."

"This is all very well, Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw," replied the Master of Ravenswood, in a tone the most calm and indifferent; "but I have no quarrel with you, and desire to have none. Our roads homeward, as well as our roads through life, lie in

different directions; there is no occasion for us crossing each other."

"Is there not?" said Bucklaw, impetuously. "By Heaven! but I say that there is, though — you called us intriguing adventurers."

"Be correct in your recollection, Mr. Hayston; it was to your companion only I applied that epithet, and you know him to be no better."

"And what then? He was my companion for the time, and no man shall insult my companion, right or wrong, while he is in my company."

"Then, Mr. Hayston," replied Ravenswood, with the same composure, "you should choose your society better, or you are like to have much work in your capacity of their champion. Go home, sir, sleep, and have more reason in your wrath to-morrow."

"Not so, Master, you have mistaken your man; high airs and wise saws shall not carry it off thus. Besides, you termed me bully, and you shall retract the word before we part."

"Faith, scarcely," said Ravenswood, "unless you show me better reason for thinking myself mistaken than you are now producing."

"Then, Master," said Bucklaw, "though I should be sorry to offer it to a man of your quality, if you will not justify your incivility, or retract it, or name a place of meeting, you must here undergo the hard word and the hard blow."

"Neither will be necessary," said Ravenswood; "I am satisfied with what I have done to avoid an affair with you. If you are serious, this place will serve as well as another."

"Dismount then, and draw," said Bucklaw, setting him an example. "I always thought and said

you were a pretty man; I should be sorry to report you otherwise."

"You shall have no reason, sir," said Ravenswood, alighting, and putting himself into a posture of defence.

Their swords crossed, and the combat commenced with great spirit on the part of Bucklaw, who was well accustomed to affairs of the kind, and distinguished by address and dexterity at his weapon. In the present case, however, he did not use his skill to advantage; for, having lost temper at the cool and contemptuous manner in which the Master of Ravenswood had long refused, and at length granted him satisfaction, and urged by his impatience, he adopted the part of an assailant with inconsiderate eagerness. The Master, with equal skill, and much greater composure, remained chiefly on the defensive, and even declined to avail himself of one or two advantages afforded him by the eagerness of his adversary. At length, in a desperate lunge, which he followed with an attempt to close, Bucklaw's foot slipped, and he fell on the short grassy turf on which they were fighting. "Take your life, sir," said the Master of Ravenswood, "and mend it, if you can."

"It would be but a cobbled piece of work, I fear," said Bucklaw, rising slowly and gathering up his sword, much less disconcerted with the issue of the combat than could have been expected from the impetuosity of his temper. "I thank you for my life, Master," he pursued. "There is my hand, I bear no ill-will to you, either for my bad luck or your better swordmanship."

The Master looked steadily at him for an instant, then extended his hand to him. — "Bucklaw,"

he said, "you are a generous fellow, and I have done you wrong. I heartily ask your pardon for the expression which offended you; it was hastily and incautiously uttered, and I am convinced it is totally misapplied."

"Are you indeed, Master?" said Bucklaw, his face resuming at once its natural expression of light-hearted carelessness and audacity; "that is more than I expected of you; for, Master, men say you are not ready to retract your opinions and your language."

"Not when I have well considered them," said the Master.

"Then you are a little wiser than I am, for I always give my friend satisfaction first, and explanation afterwards. If one of us falls, all accounts are settled; if not, men are never so ready for peace as after war. — But what does that bawling brat of a boy want?" said Bucklaw. "I wish to Heaven he had come a few minutes sooner! and yet it must have been ended some time, and perhaps this way is as well as any other."

As he spoke, the boy he mentioned came up, cudgelling an ass, on which he was mounted, to the top of its speed, and sending, like one of Ossian's heroes, his voice before him, — "Gentlemen, — gentlemen, save yourselves! for the gudewife bade us tell ye there were folk in her house had taen Captain Craigengelt, and were seeking for Bucklaw, and that ye behoved to ride for it."

"By my faith, and that's very true, my man," said Bucklaw; "and there's a silver sixpence for your news, and I would give any man twice as much would tell me which way I should ride."

"That will I, Bucklaw," said Ravenswood; "ride

home to Wolf's Crag with me. There are places in the old tower where you might lie hid, were a thousand men to seek you."

"But that will bring you into trouble yourself, Master; and unless you be in the Jacobite scrape already, it is quite needless for me to drag you in."

"Not a whit; I have nothing to fear."

"Then I will ride with you blithely, for, to say the truth, I do not know the rendezvous that Craigie was to guide us to this night; and I am sure that, if he is taken, he will tell all the truth of me, and twenty lies of you, in order to save himself from the withie."

They mounted, and rode off in company accordingly, striking off the ordinary road, and holding their way by wild moorish unfrequented paths, with which the gentlemen were well acquainted from the exercise of the chase, but through which others would have had much difficulty in tracing their course. They rode for some time in silence, making such haste as the condition of Ravenswood's horse permitted, until night having gradually closed around them, they discontinued their speed, both from the difficulty of discovering their path, and from the hope that they were beyond the reach of pursuit or observation.

"And now that we have drawn bridle abit," said Bucklaw, "I would fain ask you a question, Master."

"Ask, and welcome," said Ravenswood, "but forgive my not answering it, unless I think proper."

"Well, it is simply this," answered his late antagonist, — "What, in the name of old Sathan, could make you, who stand so highly on your reputation, think for a moment of drawing up with such a

rogue as Craigengelt, and such a scape-grace as folk call Bucklaw?"

"Simply, because I was desperate, and sought desperate associates."

"And what made you break off from us at the nearest?" again demanded Bucklaw.

"Because I had changed my mind," said the Master, "and renounced my enterprise, at least for the present. And now that I have answered your questions fairly and frankly, tell me what makes you associate with Craigengelt, so much beneath you both in birth and in spirit?"

"In plain terms," answered Bucklaw, "because I am a fool, who have gambled away my land in these times. My grand-aunt, Lady Girnington, has taen a new tack of life, I think, and I could only hope to get something by a change of government. Craigie was a sort of gambling acquaintance; he saw my condition; and, as the devil is always at one's elbow, told me fifty lies about his credentials from Versailles, and his interest at Saint Germains, promised me a captain's commission at Paris, and I have been ass enough to put my thumb under his belt. I daresay, by this time, he has told a dozen pretty stories of me to the government. And this is what I have got by wine, women, and dice, cocks, dogs, and horses."

"Yes, Bucklaw," said the Master, "you have indeed nourished in your bosom the snakes that are now stinging you."

"That's home as well as true, Master," replied his companion; "but, by your leave, you have nursed in your bosom one great goodly snake that has swallowed all the rest, and is as sure to devour you as my half dozen are to make a meal on all that's left

of Bucklaw, which is but what lies between bonnet and boot-heel."

"I must not," answered the Master of Ravenswood, "challenge the freedom of speech in which I have set example. What, to speak without a metaphor, do you call this monstrous passion, which you charge me with fostering?"

"Revenge, my good sir, revenge; which, if it be as gentleman-like a sin as wine and wassail, with their *et cœteras*, is equally unchristian, and not so bloodless. It is better breaking a park-pale to watch a doe or damsel, than to shoot an old man."

"I deny the purpose," said the Master of Ravenswood. "On my soul, I had no such intention; I meant but to confront the oppressor ere I left my native land, and upbraid him with his tyranny and its consequences. I would have stated my wrongs so that they would have shaken his soul within him."

"Yes," answered Bucklaw, "and he would have collared you, and cried help, and then you would have shaken the soul *out* of him, I suppose. Your very look and manner would have frightened the old man to death."

"Consider the provocation," answered Ravenswood — "consider the ruin and death procured and caused by his hard-hearted cruelty — an ancient house destroyed, an affectionate father murdered! Why, in our old Scottish days, he that sat quiet under such wrongs, would have been held neither fit to back a friend nor face a foe."

"Well, Master, I am glad to see that the devil deals as cunningly with other folk as he deals with me; for whenever I am about to commit any folly, he persuades me it is the most necessary, gallant,

gentlemanlike thing on earth, and I am up to saddlegirths in the bog before I see that the ground is soft. And you, Master, might have turned out a murd——a homicide, just out of pure respect for your father's memory."

"There is more sense in your language, Bucklaw," replied the Master, "than might have been expected from your conduct. It is too true, our vices steal upon us in forms outwardly as fair as those of the demons whom the superstitious represent as intriguing with the human race, and are not discovered in their native hideousness until we have clasped them in our arms."

"But we may throw them from us, though," said Bucklaw, "and that is what I shall think of doing one of these days,—that is, when old Lady Girnington dies."

"Did you ever hear the expression of the English divine?" said Ravenswood—"'Hell is paved with good intentions'—as much as to say, they are more often formed than executed."

"Well," replied Bucklaw, "but I will begin this blessed night, and have determined not to drink above one quart of wine, unless your claret be of extraordinary quality."

"You will find little to tempt you at Wolf's Crag," said the Master. "I know not that I can promise you more than the shelter of my roof; all, and more than all, our stock of wine and provisions was exhausted at the late occasion."

"Long may it be ere provision is needed for the like purpose," answered Bucklaw; "but you should not drink up the last flask at a dirge; there is ill luck in that."

"There is ill luck, I think, in whatever belongs to

me," said Ravenswood. "But yonder is Wolf's Crag, and whatever it still contains is at your service."

The roar of the sea had long announced their approach to the cliffs, on the summit of which, like the nest of some sea-eagle, the founder of the fort-alice had perched his eyry. The pale moon, which had hitherto been contending with flitting clouds, now shone out, and gave them a view of the solitary and naked tower, situated on a projecting cliff that beetled on the German Ocean. On three sides the rock was precipitous; on the fourth, which was that towards the land, it had been originally fenced by an artificial ditch and drawbridge, but the latter was broken down and ruinous, and the former had been in part filled up, so as to allow passage for a horseman into the narrow court-yard, encircled on two sides with low offices and stables, partly ruinous, and closed on the landward front by a low embattled wall, while the remaining side of the quadrangle was occupied by the tower itself, which, tall and narrow, and built of a greyish stone, stood glimmering in the moonlight, like the sheeted spectre of some huge giant. A wilder, or more disconsolate dwelling, it was perhaps difficult to conceive. The sombrous and heavy sound of the billows, successively dashing against the rocky beach at a profound distance beneath, was to the ear what the landscape was to the eye — a symbol of unvaried and monotonous melancholy, not unmingled with horror.

Although the night was not far advanced, there was no sign of living inhabitant about this forlorn abode, excepting that one, and only one, of the narrow and stanchelled windows which appeared at irregular heights and distances in the walls of the building, showed a small glimmer of light.

"There," said Ravenswood, "sits the only male domestic that remains to the house of Ravenswood; and it is well that he does remain there, since otherwise, we had little hope to find either light or fire. But follow me cautiously; the road is narrow, and admits only one horse in front."

In effect, the path led along a kind of isthmus, at the peninsular extremity of which the tower was situated, with that exclusive attention to strength and security, in preference to every circumstance of convenience, which dictated to the Scottish barons the choice of their situations, as well as their style of building.

By adopting the cautious mode of approach recommended by the proprietor of this wild hold, they entered the court-yard in safety. But it was long ere the efforts of Ravenswood, though loudly exerted by knocking at the low-browed entrance, and repeated shouts to Caleb to open the gate and admit them, received any answer.

"The old man must be departed," he began to say, "or fallen into some fit; for the noise I have made would have waked the seven sleepers."

At length a timid and hesitating voice replied, — "Master — Master of Ravenswood, is it you?"

"Yes, it is I, Caleb; open the door quickly."

"But is it you in very blood and body? For I would sooner face fifty deevils as my master's ghaist, or even his wraith, — wherefore, aroint ye, if ye were ten times my master, unless ye come in bodily shape, lith and limb."

"It is I, you old fool," answered Ravenswood, "in bodily shape, and alive, save that I am half dead with cold."

The light at the upper window disappeared, and

glancing from loop-hole to loop-hole in slow succession, gave intimation that the bearer was in the act of descending, with great deliberation, a winding staircase occupying one of the turrets which graced the angles of the old tower. The tardiness of his descent extracted some exclamations of impatience from Ravenswood, and several oaths from his less patient and more mercurial companion. Caleb again paused ere he unbolted the door, and once more asked, if they were men of mould that demanded entrance at this time of night?

"Were I near you, you old fool," said Bucklaw, "I would give you sufficient proofs of *my* bodily condition."

"Open the gate, Caleb," said his master, in a more soothing tone, partly from his regard to the ancient and faithful seneschal, partly perhaps because he thought that angry words would be thrown away, so long as Caleb had a stout iron-clenched oaken door betwixt his person and the speakers.

At length Caleb, with a trembling hand, undid the bars, opened the heavy door, and stood before them, exhibiting his thin grey hairs, bald forehead, and sharp high features, illuminated by a quivering lamp which he held in one hand, while he shaded and protected its flame with the other. The timorous courteous glance which he threw around him — the effect of the partial light upon his white hair and illumined features, might have made a good painting; but our travellers were too impatient for security against the rising storm, to permit them to indulge themselves in studying the picturesque. "Is it you, my dear master? is it you yourself, indeed?" exclaimed the old domestic. "I am wae ye suld hae stude waiting at your ain gate; but

wha wad hae thought o' seeing ye sae sune, and a strange gentleman with a — (Here he exclaimed apart, as it were, and to some inmate of the tower, in a voice not meant to be heard by those in the court) — Mysie — Mysie woman! stir for dear life, and get the fire mended; take the auld three-legged stool, or ony thing that's readiest that will make a lowe. — I doubt we are but puirly provided, no expecting ye this some months, when doubtless ye wad hae been received conform till your rank, as gude right is; but natheless" ——

"Natheless, Caleb," said the Master, "we must have our horses put up, and ourselves too, the best way we can. I hope you are not sorry to see me sooner than you expected?"

"Sorry, my lord! — I am sure ye sall aye be my lord wi' honest folk, as your noble ancestors hae been these three hundred years, and never asked a whig's leave. Sorry to see the Lord of Ravenswood at ane o' his ain castles! — (Then again apart to his unseen associate behind the screen) — Mysie, kill the brood-hen without thinking twice on it; let them care that come ahint. — No to say it's our best dwelling," he added, turning to Bucklaw; "but just a strength for the Lord of Ravenswood to flee until, — that is, no to *flee*, but to retreat until in troublous times, like the present, when it was ill convenient for him to live farther in the country in ony of his better and mair principal manors; but, for its antiquity, maist folk think that the outside of Wolf's Crag is worthy of a large perusal."

"And you are determined we shall have time to make it," said Ravenswood, somewhat amused with the shifts the old man used to detain them

without doors, until his confederate Mysie had made her preparations within.

"O, never mind the outside of the house, my good friend," said Bucklaw; "let's see the inside, and let our horses see the stable, that's all."

"O yes, sir — ay, sir, — unquestionably, sir — my lord and ony of his honourable companions" ——

"But our horses, my old friend — our horses; they will be dead-foundered by standing here in the cold after riding hard, and mine is too good to be spoiled; therefore, once more, our horses," exclaimed Bucklaw.

"True — ay — your horses — yes — I will call the grooms;" and sturdily did Caleb roar till the old tower rang again, — "John — William — Saunders! — The lads are gane out, or sleeping," he observed, after pausing for an answer, which he knew that he had no human chance of receiving. "A' gaes wrang when the Master's out by; but I'll take care o' your cattle mysell."

"I think you had better," said Ravenswood, "otherwise I see little chance of their being attended to at all."

"Whisht, my lord, — whisht, for God's sake," said Caleb, in an imploring tone, and apart to his master; "if ye dinna regard your ain credit, think on mine; we'll hae hard eneugh wark to mak a decent night o't, wi' a' the lees I can tell."

"Well, well, never mind," said his master; "go to the stable. There is hay and corn, I trust?"

"Ou ay, plenty of hay and corn;" this was uttered boldly and aloud, and, in a lower tone, "there was some half fous o' aits, and some taits o' meadow-hay, left after the burial."

"Very well," said Ravenswood, taking the lamp

from his domestic's unwilling hand, "I will show the stranger up stairs myself."

"I canna think o' that, my lord;—if ye wad but have five minutes, or ten minutes, or, at maist, a quarter of an hour's patience, and look at the fine moonlight prospect of the Bass and North-Berwick Law till I sort the horses, I would marshal ye up, as reason is ye suld be marshalled, your lordship and your honourable visitor. And I hae lockit up the siller candlesticks, and the lamp is not fit"——

"It will do very well in the meantime," said Ravenswood, "and you will have no difficulty for want of light in the stable, for, if I recollect, half the roof is off."

"Very true, my lord," replied the trusty adherent, and with ready wit instantly added, "and the lazy sclater loons have never come to put it on a' this while, your lordship."

"If I were disposed to jest at the calamities of my house," said Ravenswood, as he led the way up stairs, "poor old Caleb would furnish me with ample means. His passion consists in representing things about our miserable *menage*, not as they are, but as, in his opinion, they ought to be; and, to say the truth, I have been often diverted with the poor wretch's expedients to supply what he thought was essential for the credit of the family, and his still more generous apologies for the want of those articles for which his ingenuity could discover no substitute. But though the tower is none of the largest, I shall have some trouble without him to find the apartment in which there is a fire."

As he spoke thus, he opened the door of the hall. "Here, at least," he said, "there is neither hearth nor harbour."

It was indeed a scene of desolation. A large vaulted room, the beams of which, combined like those of Westminster-Hall, were rudely carved at the extremities, remained nearly in the situation in which it had been left after the entertainment at Allan Lord Ravenswood's funeral. Overturned pitchers, and black jacks, and pewter stoups, and flagons, still cumbered the large oaken table; glasses, those more perishable implements of conviviality, many of which had been voluntarily sacrificed by the guests in their enthusiastic pledges to favourite toasts, strewed the stone floor with their fragments. As for the articles of plate, lent for the purpose by friends and kinsfolk, those had been carefully withdrawn so soon as the ostentatious display of festivity, equally unnecessary and strangely timed, had been made and ended. Nothing, in short, remained that indicated wealth; all the signs were those of recent wastefulness, and present desolation. The black cloth hangings, which, on the late mournful occasion, replaced the tattered moth-eaten tapestries, had been partly pulled down, and, dangling from the wall in irregular festoons, disclosed the rough stone-work of the building, unsmoothed either by plaster or the chisel. The seats thrown down, or left in disorder, intimated the careless confusion which had concluded the mournful revel. "This room," said Ravenswood, holding up the lamp — "this room, Mr. Hayston, was riotous when it should have been sad; it is a just retribution that it should now be sad when it ought to be cheerful."

They left this disconsolate apartment, and went up stairs, where, after opening one or two doors in vain, Ravenswood led the way into a little matted

anteroom, in which, to their great joy, they found a tolerably good fire, which Mysie, by some such expedient as Caleb had suggested, had supplied with a reasonable quantity of fuel. Glad at the heart to see more of comfort than the castle had yet seemed to offer, Bucklaw rubbed his hands heartily over the fire, and now listened with more complacency to the apologies which the Master of Ravenswood offered. "Comfort," he said, "I cannot provide for you, for I have it not for myself; it is long since these walls have known it, if, indeed, they were ever acquainted with it. Shelter and safety, I think, I can promise you."

"Excellent matters, Master," replied Bucklaw, "and, with a mouthful of food and wine, positively all I can require to-night."

"I fear," said the Master, "your supper will be a poor one; I hear the matter in discussion betwixt Caleb and Mysie. Poor Balderstone is something deaf, amongst his other accomplishments, so that much of what he means should be spoken aside is overheard by the whole audience, and especially by those from whom he is most anxious to conceal his private manœuvres — Hark!"

They listened, and heard the old domestic's voice in conversation with Mysie to the following effect. "Just mak the best o't, mak the best o't, woman; it's easy to put a fair face on ony thing."

"But the auld brood-hen? — she'll be as teugh as bow-strings and bend-leather!"

"Say ye made a mistake — say ye made a mistake, Mysie," replied the faithful seneschal, in a soothing and undertoned voice; "tak it a' on yoursell; never let the credit o' the house suffer."

"But the brood-hen," remonstrated Mysie, —

"ou, she's sitting some gate aneath the dais in the hall, and I am feared to gae in in the dark for the bogle; and if I didna see the bogle, I could as ill see the hen, for it's pit-mirk, and there's no another light in the house, save that very blessed lamp whilk the Master has in his ain hand. And if I had the hen, she's to pu', and to draw, and to dress; how can I do that, and them sitting by the only fire we have?"

"Weel, weel, Mysie," said the butler, "bide ye there a wee, and I'll try to get the lamp wiled away frae them."

Accordingly, Caleb Balderstone entered the apartment, little aware that so much of his by-play had been audible there. "Well, Caleb, my old friend, is there any chance of supper?" said the Master of Ravenswood.

"*Chance* of supper, your lordship?" said Caleb, with an emphasis of strong scorn at the implied doubt, — "How should there be ony question of that, and us in your lordship's house? — Chance of supper, indeed! — But ye'll no be for butcher-meat? There's walth o' fat poultry, ready either for spit or brander — The fat capon, Mysie!" he added, calling out as boldly as if such a thing had been in existence.

"Quite unnecessary," said Bucklaw, who deemed himself bound in courtesy to relieve some part of the anxious butler's perplexity, "if you have any thing cold, or a morsel of bread."

"The best of bannocks!" exclaimed Caleb, much relieved; "and, for cauld meat, a' that we hae is cauld eneugh, — howbeit maist of the cauld meat and pastry was gien to the poor folk after the ceremony of interment, as gude reason was; nevertheless" ——

"Come, Caleb," said the Master of Ravenswood, "I must cut this matter short. This is the young laird of Bucklaw; he is under hiding, and therefore, you know" ——

"He'll be nae nicer than your lordship's honour, I'se warrant," answered Caleb, cheerfully, with a nod of intelligence; "I am sorry that the gentleman is under distress, but I am blithe that he canna say muckle agane our house-keeping, for I believe his ain pinches may match ours; — no that we are pinched, thank God," he added, retracting the admission which he had made in his first burst of joy, "but nae doubt we are waur aff than we hae been, or suld be. And for eating, — what signifies telling a lee? there's just the hinder end of the mutton-ham that has been but three times on the table, and the nearer the bane the sweeter, as your honours weel ken; and — there's the heel of the ewe-milk kebbuck, wi' a bit of nice butter, and — and — that's a' that's to trust to." And with great alacrity he produced his slender stock of provisions, and placed them with much formality upon a small round table betwixt the two gentlemen, who were not deterred either by the homely quality or limited quantity of the repast from doing it full justice. Caleb in the meanwhile waited on them with grave officiousness, as if anxious to make up, by his own respectful assiduity, for the want of all other attendance.

But alas! how little on such occasions can form, however anxiously and scrupulously observed, supply the lack of substantial fare! Bucklaw, who had eagerly eaten a considerable portion of the thrice-sacked mutton-ham, now began to demand ale.

"I wadna just presume to recommend our ale,"

said Caleb; "the maut was ill made, and there was awfu' thunner last week; but siccan water as the Tower well has ye'll seldom see, Bucklaw, and that I'se engage for."

"But if your ale is bad, you can let us have some wine," said Bucklaw, making a grimace at the mention of the pure element which Caleb so earnestly recommended.

"Wine?" answered Caleb, undauntedly, "eneugh of wine; it was but twa days syne — wae's me for the cause — there was as much wine drunk in this house as would have floated a pinnace. There never was lack of wine at Wolf's Crag."

"Do fetch us some then," said his master, "instead of talking about it." And Caleb boldly departed.

Every expended butt in the old cellar did he set a-tilt, and shake with the desperate expectation of collecting enough of the grounds of claret to fill the large pewter measure which he carried in his hand. Alas! each had been too devoutly drained; and, with all the squeezing and manœuvring which his craft as a butler suggested, he could only collect about half a quart that seemed presentable. Still, however, Caleb was too good a general to renounce the field without a stratagem to cover his retreat. He undauntedly threw down an empty flagon, as if he had stumbled at the entrance of the apartment; called upon Mysie to wipe up the wine that had never been spilt, and placing the other vessel on the table, hoped there was still enough left for their honours. There was indeed; for even Bucklaw, a sworn friend to the grape, found no encouragement to renew his first attack upon the vintage of Wolf's Crag, but contented himself, however

reluctantly, with a draught of fair water. Arrangements were now made for his repose; and as the secret chamber was assigned for this purpose, it furnished Caleb with a first-rate and most plausible apology for all deficiencies of furniture, bedding, &c.

"For wha," said he, "would have thought of the secret chaumer being needed? it has not been used since the time of the Gowrie Conspiracy, and I durst never let a woman ken of the entrance to it, or your honour will allow that it wad not hae been a secret chaumer lang."

CHAPTER VIII.

The hearth in hall was black and dead,
No board was dight in bower within,
Nor merry bowl nor welcome bed;
"Here's sorry cheer," quoth the Heir of Linne.

Old Ballad.

THE feelings of the prodigal Heir of Linne, as expressed in that excellent old song, when, after dissipating his whole fortune, he found himself the deserted inhabitant of "the lonely lodge," might perhaps have some resemblance to those of the Master of Ravenswood in his deserted mansion of Wolf's Crag. The Master, however, had this advantage over the spendthrift in the legend, that if he was in similar distress, he could not impute it to his own imprudence. His misery had been bequeathed to him by his father, and, joined to his high blood, and to a title which the courteous might give, or the churlish withhold, at their pleasure, it was the whole inheritance he had derived from his ancestry.

Perhaps this melancholy, yet consolatory reflection, crossed the mind of the unfortunate young nobleman with a breathing of comfort. Favourable to calm reflection, as well as to the Muses, the morning, while it dispelled the shades of night, had a composing and sedative effect upon the stormy passions by which the Master of Ravenswood had been agitated on the preceding day. He now felt himself able to analyse the different feelings by

which he was agitated, and much resolved to combat and to subdue them. The morning, which had arisen calm and bright, gave a pleasant effect even to the waste moorland view which was seen from the castle on looking to the landward; and the glorious ocean, crisped with a thousand rippling waves of silver, extended on the other side, in awful yet complacent majesty, to the verge of the horizon. With such scenes of calm sublimity the human heart sympathizes even in its most disturbed moods, and deeds of honour and virtue are inspired by their majestic influence.

To seek out Bucklaw in the retreat which he had afforded him was the first occupation of the Master, after he had performed, with a scrutiny unusually severe, the important task of self-examination. "How now, Bucklaw?" was his morning's salutation — "how like you the couch in which the exiled Earl of Angus once slept in security, when he was pursued by the full energy of a king's resentment?"

"Umph!" returned the sleeper awakened; "I have little to complain of where so great a man was quartered before me, only the mattress was of the hardest, the vault somewhat damp, the rats rather more mutinous than I would have expected from the state of Caleb's larder; and if there had been shutters to that grated window, or a curtain to the bed, I should think it, upon the whole, an improvement in your accommodations."

"It is, to be sure, forlorn enough," said the Master, looking around the small vault; "but if you will rise and leave it, Caleb will endeavour to find you a better breakfast than your supper of last night."

"Pray, let it be no better," said Bucklaw, getting up, and endeavouring to dress himself as well as the obscurity of the place would permit — "let it, I say, be no better, if you mean me to persevere in my proposed reformation. The very recollection of Caleb's beverage has done more to suppress my longing to open the day with a morning-draught than twenty sermons would have done. And you, Master, have you been able to give battle valiantly to your bosom-snake? You see I am in the way of smothering my vipers one by one."

"I have commenced the battle, at least, Bucklaw, and I have had a fair vision of an angel who descended to my assistance," replied the Master.

"Woe's me!" said his guest, "no vision can I expect, unless my aunt, Lady Girnington, should betake herself to the tomb; and then it would be the substance of her heritage rather than the appearance of her phantom that I should consider as the support of my good resolutions. — But this same breakfast, Master, — does the deer that is to make the pasty run yet on foot, as the ballad has it?"

"I will enquire into that matter," said his entertainer; and, leaving the apartment, he went in search of Caleb, whom, after some difficulty, he found in an obscure sort of dungeon, which had been in former times the buttery of the castle. Here the old man was employed busily in the doubtful task of burnishing a pewter flagon until it should take the hue and semblance of silver-plate. "I think it may do — I think it might pass, if they winna bring it ower muckle in the light o' the window!" were the ejaculations which he muttered from time to time, as if to encourage himself in his undertaking, when he was interrupted by the voice

of his master. "Take this," said the Master of Ravenswood, "and get what is necessary for the family." And with these words he gave to the old butler the purse which had on the preceding evening so narrowly escaped the fangs of Craigengelt. The old man shook his silvery and thin locks, and looked with an expression of the most heartfelt anguish at his master as he weighed in his hand the slender treasure, and said in a sorrowful voice, "And is this a' that's left?"

"All that is left at present," said the Master, affecting more cheerfulness than perhaps he really felt, "is just the green purse and the wee pickle gowd, as the old song says; but we shall do better one day, Caleb."

"Before that day comes," said Caleb, "I doubt there will be an end of an auld sang, and an auld serving-man to boot. But it disna become me to speak that gate to your honour, and you looking sae pale. Tak back the purse, and keep it to be making a show before company; for if your honour would just tak a bidding, and be whiles taking it out afore folk and putting it up again, there's naebody would refuse us trust, for a' that's come and gane yet."

"But, Caleb," said the Master, "I still intend to leave this country very soon, and desire to do so with the reputation of an honest man, leaving no debt behind me, at least of my own contracting."

"And gude right ye suld gang away as a true man, and so ye shall; for auld Caleb can tak the wyte of whatever is taen on for the house, and then it will be a' just ae man's burden; and I will live just as weel in the tolbooth as out of it, and the credit of the family will be a' safe and sound."

The Master endeavoured, in vain, to make Caleb

comprehend, that the butler's incurring the responsibility of debts in his own person, would rather add to than remove the objections which he had to their being contracted. He spoke to a premier, too busy in devising ways and means to puzzle himself with refuting the arguments offered against their justice or expediency.

"There's Eppie Sma'trash will trust us for ale," said Caleb to himself; "she has lived a' her life under the family — and maybe wi' a soup brandy — I canna say for wine — she is but a lone woman, and gets her claret by a runlet at a time — but I'll work a wee drap out o' her by fair means or foul. For doos, there's the doocot — there will be poultry amang the tenants, though Luckie Chirnside says she has paid the kain twice ower. We'll mak shift, an it like your honour — we'll mak shift — keep your heart abune, for the house sall haud its credit as lang as auld Caleb is to the fore."

The entertainment which the old man's exertions of various kinds enabled him to present to the young gentlemen for three or four days, was certainly of no splendid description, but it may readily be believed it was set before no critical guests; and even the distresses, excuses, evasions, and shifts of Caleb, afforded amusement to the young men, and added a sort of interest to the scrambling and irregular style of their table. They had indeed occasion to seize on every circumstance that might serve to diversify or enliven time, which otherwise passed away so heavily.

Bucklaw, shut out from his usual field-sports and joyous carouses by the necessity of remaining concealed within the walls of the castle, became a joyless and uninteresting companion. When the Mas-

ter of Ravenswood would no longer fence or play at shovel-board — when he himself had polished to the extremity the coat of his palfrey with brush, curry-comb, and hair-cloth — when he had seen him eat his provender, and gently lie down in his stall, he could hardly help envying the animal's apparent acquiescence in a life so monotonous. "The stupid brute," he said, "thinks neither of the race-ground or the hunting-field, or his green paddock at Bucklaw, but enjoys himself as comfortably when haltered to the rack in this ruinous vault, as if he had been foaled in it; and I, who have the freedom of a prisoner at large, to range through the dungeons of this wretched old tower, can hardly, betwixt whistling and sleeping, contrive to pass away the hour till dinner-time."

And with this disconsolate reflection, he wended his way to the bartizan or battlements of the tower, to watch what objects might appear on the distant moor, or to pelt, with pebbles and pieces of lime, the sea-mews and cormorants which established themselves incautiously within the reach of an idle young man.

Ravenswood, with a mind incalculably deeper and more powerful than that of his companion, had his own anxious subjects of reflection, which wrought for him the same unhappiness that sheer ennui and want of occupation inflicted on his companion. The first sight of Lucy Ashton had been less impressive than her image proved to be upon reflection. As the depth and violence of that revengeful passion, by which he had been actuated in seeking an interview with the father, began to abate by degrees, he looked back on his conduct towards the daughter as harsh and unworthy towards a female of rank and

beauty. Her looks of grateful acknowledgment, her words of affectionate courtesy, had been repelled with something which approached to disdain; and if the Master of Ravenswood had sustained wrongs at the hand of Sir William Ashton, his conscience told him they had been unhandsomely resented towards his daughter. When his thoughts took this turn of self-reproach, the recollection of Lucy Ashton's beautiful features, rendered yet more interesting by the circumstances in which their meeting had taken place, made an impression upon his mind at once soothing and painful. The sweetness of her voice, the delicacy of her expressions, the vivid glow of her filial affection, embittered his regret at having repulsed her gratitude with rudeness, while, at the same time, they placed before his imagination a picture of the most seducing sweetness.

Even young Ravenswood's strength of moral feeling and rectitude of purpose at once increased the danger of cherishing these recollections, and the propensity to entertain them. Firmly resolved as he was to subdue, if possible, the predominating vice in his character, he admitted with willingness — nay, he summoned up in his imagination, the ideas by which it could be most powerfully counteracted; and, while he did so, a sense of his own harsh conduct towards the daughter of his enemy naturally induced him, as if by way of recompense, to invest her with more of grace and beauty than perhaps she could actually claim.

Had any one at this period told the Master of Ravenswood that he had so lately vowed vengeance against the whole lineage of him whom he considered, not unjustly, as author of his father's ruin and death, he might at first have repelled the charge as a foul

calumny; yet, upon serious self-examination, he would have been compelled to admit, that it had, at one period, some foundation in truth, though, according to the present tone of his sentiments, it was difficult to believe that this had really been the case.

There already existed in his bosom two contradictory passions, — a desire to revenge the death of his father, strangely qualified by admiration of his enemy's daughter. Against the former feeling he had struggled, until it seemed to him upon the wane; against the latter he used no means of resistance, for he did not suspect its existence. That this was actually the case, was chiefly evinced by his resuming his resolution to leave Scotland. Yet, though such was his purpose, he remained day after day at Wolf's Crag, without taking measures for carrying it into execution. It is true, that he had written to one or two kinsmen, who resided in a distant quarter of Scotland, and particularly to the Marquis of A——, intimating his purpose; and when pressed upon the subject by Bucklaw, he was wont to allege the necessity of waiting for their reply, especially that of the Marquis, before taking so decisive a measure.

The Marquis was rich and powerful; and although he was suspected to entertain sentiments unfavourable to the government established at the Revolution, he had nevertheless address enough to head a party in the Scottish Privy Council, connected with the high church faction in England, and powerful enough to menace those to whom the Lord Keeper adhered, with a probable subversion of their power. The consulting with a personage of such importance was a plausible excuse, which Ravenswood used to Bucklaw, and probably to himself, for continuing his residence at Wolf's Crag; and it was rendered

yet more so by a general report which began to be current, of a probable change of ministers and measures in the Scottish administration. These rumours, strongly asserted by some, and as resolutely denied by others, as their wishes or interest dictated, found their way even to the ruinous Tower of Wolf's Crag, chiefly through the medium of Caleb the butler, who, among his other excellences, was an ardent politician, and seldom made an excursion from the old fortress to the neighbouring village of Wolf's-hope, without bringing back what tidings were current in the vicinity.

But if Bucklaw could not offer any satisfactory objections to the delay of the Master in leaving Scotland, he did not the less suffer with impatience the state of inaction to which it confined him; and it was only the ascendency which his new companion had acquired over him, that induced him to submit to a course of life so alien to his habits and inclinations.

"You were wont to be thought a stirring active young fellow, Master," was his frequent remonstrance; "yet here you seem determined to live on and on like a rat in a hole, with this trifling difference, that the wiser vermin chooses a hermitage where he can find food at least; but as for us, Caleb's excuses become longer as his diet turns more spare, and I fear we shall realize the stories they tell of the sloth, — we have almost eat up the last green leaf on the plant, and have nothing left for it but to drop from the tree and break our necks."

"Do not fear it," said Ravenswood; "there is a fate watches for us, and we too have a stake in the revolution that is now impending, and which already has alarmed many a bosom."

"What fate — what revolution?" enquired his companion. "We have had one revolution too much already, I think."

Ravenswood interrupted him by putting into his hands a letter.

"O," answered Bucklaw, "my dream's out — I thought I heard Caleb this morning pressing some unfortunate fellow to a drink of cold water, and assuring him it was better for his stomach in the morning than ale or brandy."

"It was my Lord of A——'s courier," said Ravenswood, "who was doomed to experience his ostentatious hospitality, which I believe ended in sour beer and herrings — Read, and you will see the news he has brought us."

"I will as fast as I can," said Bucklaw; "but I am no great clerk, nor does his lordship seem to be the first of scribes."

The reader will peruse, in a few seconds, by the aid of our friend Ballantyne's types, what took Bucklaw a good half hour in perusal, though assisted by the Master of Ravenswood. The tenor was as follows: —

"*Right Honourable our Cousin,* — Our hearty commendations premised, these come to assure you of the interest which we take in your welfare, and in your purposes towards its augmentation. If we have been less active in showing forth our effective good-will towards you than, as a loving kinsman and blood-relative, we would willingly have desired, we request that you will impute it to lack of opportunity to show our good-liking, not to any coldness of our will. Touching your resolution to travel in foreign parts, as at this time we hold the same little advisable, in respect that your ill-willers may, according to the custom of such

persons, impute motives for your journey, whereof, although we know and believe you to be as clear as ourselves, yet natheless their words may find credence in places where the belief in them may much prejudice you, and which we should see with more unwillingness and displeasure than with means of remedy.

"Having thus, as becometh our kindred, given you our poor mind on the subject of your journeying forth of Scotland, we would willingly add reasons of weight, which might materially advantage you and your father's house, thereby to determine you to abide at Wolf's Crag, until this harvest season shall be passed over. But what sayeth the proverb, *verbum sapienti*, — a word is more to him that hath wisdom than a sermon to a fool. And albeit we have written this poor scroll with our own hand, and are well assured of the fidelity of our messenger, as him that is many ways bounden to us, yet so it is that sliddery ways crave wary walking, and that we may not peril upon paper matters which we would gladly impart to you by word of mouth. Wherefore, it was our purpose to have prayed you heartily to come to this our barren Highland country to kill a stag, and to treat of the matters which we are now more painfully inditing to you anent. But commodity does not serve at present for such our meeting, which, therefore, shall be deferred intil sic time as we may in all mirth rehearse those things whereof we now keep silence. Meantime, we pray you to think that we are, and will still be, your good kinsman and well-wisher, waiting but for times of whilk we do, as it were, entertain a twilight prospect, and appear and hope to be also your effectual well-doer. And in which hope we heartily write ourself,

"Right Honourable,

"Your loving cousin,

"A——

"Given from our poor house of B——, &c."

Superscribed — "For the right honourable and our honoured kinsman, the Master of Ravenswood — These, with haste, haste, post haste — ride and run until these be delivered."

"What think you of this epistle, Bucklaw?" said the Master, when his companion had hammered out all the sense, and almost all the words of which it consisted.

"Truly, that the Marquis's meaning is as great a riddle as his manuscript. He is really in much need of Wit's Interpreter, or the Complete Letter-Writer, and were I you, I would send him a copy by the bearer. He writes you very kindly to remain wasting your time and your money in this vile, stupid, oppressed country, without so much as offering you the countenance and shelter of his house. In my opinion, he has some scheme in view in which he supposes you can be useful, and he wishes to keep you at hand, to make use of you when it ripens, reserving the power of turning you adrift, should his plot fail in the concoction."

"His plot? — then you suppose it is a treasonable business," answered Ravenswood.

"What else can it be?" replied Bucklaw; "the Marquis has been long suspected to have an eye to Saint Germains."

"He should not engage me rashly in such an adventure," said Ravenswood; "when I recollect the times of the first and second Charles, and of the last James, truly I see little reason, that, as a man or a patriot, I should draw my sword for their descendants."

"Humph!" replied Bucklaw; "so you have set yourself down to mourn over the crop-eared dogs, whom honest Claver'se treated as they deserved?"

"They first gave the dogs an ill name, and then hanged them," replied Ravenswood. "I hope to see the day when justice shall be open to Whig and Tory, and when these nick-names shall only be used among coffee-house politicians, as slut and jade are among apple-women, as cant terms of idle spite and rancour."

"That will not be in our days, Master — the iron has entered too deeply into our sides and our souls."

"It will be, however, one day," replied the Master; "men will not always start at these nick-names as at a trumpet-sound. As social life is better protected, its comforts will become too dear to be hazarded without some better reason than speculative politics."

"It is fine talking," answered Bucklaw; "but my heart is with the old song, —

> 'To see good corn upon the rigs,
> And a gallows built to hang the Whigs,
> And the right restored where the right should be,
> O, that is the thing that would wanton me.' "

"You may sing as loudly as you will, *cantabit vacuus*," — answered the Master; "but I believe the Marquis is too wise, at least too wary, to join you in such a burden. I suspect he alludes to a revolution in the Scottish Privy Council, rather than in the British kingdoms."

"O, confusion to your state-tricks!" exclaimed Bucklaw, "your cold calculating manœuvres, which old gentlemen in wrought nightcaps and furred gowns execute like so many games at chess, and displace a treasurer or lord commissioner as they would take a rook or a pawn. Tennis for my sport,

and battle for my earnest! My racket and my sword for my plaything and bread-winner! And you, Master, so deep and considerate as you would seem, you have that within you makes the blood boil faster than suits your present humour of moralizing on political truths. You are one of those wise men who see everything with great composure till their blood is up, and then — woe to any one who should put them in mind of their own prudential maxims!"

"Perhaps," said Ravenswood, "you read me more rightly than I can myself. But to think justly will certainly go some length in helping me to act so. But hark! I hear Caleb tolling the dinner-bell."

"Which he always does with the more sonorous grace, in proportion to the meagreness of the cheer which he has provided," said Bucklaw; "as if that infernal clang and jangle, which will one day bring the belfry down the cliff, could convert a starved hen into a fat capon, and a blade-bone of mutton into a haunch of venison."

"I wish we may be so well off as your worst conjectures surmise, Bucklaw, from the extreme solemnity and ceremony with which Caleb seems to place on the table that solitary covered dish."

"Uncover, Caleb! uncover, for Heaven's sake!" said Bucklaw; "let us have what you can give us without preface — Why, it stands well enough, man," he continued, addressing impatiently the ancient butler, who, without reply, kept shifting the dish, until he had at length placed it with mathematical precision in the very midst of the table.

"What have we got here, Caleb?" enquired the Master in his turn.

"Ahem! sir, ye suld have known before; but his honour the Laird of Bucklaw is so impatient," answered Caleb, still holding the dish with one hand, and the cover with the other, with evident reluctance to disclose the contents.

"But what is it, a God's name — not a pair of clean spurs, I hope, in the Border fashion of old times?"

"Ahem! ahem!" reiterated Caleb, "your honour is pleased to be facetious — natheless, I might presume to say it was a convenient fashion, and used, as I have heard, in an honourable and thriving family. But touching your present dinner, I judged that this being Saint Magdalen's Eve, who was a worthy queen of Scotland in her day, your honours might judge it decorous, if not altogether to fast, yet only to sustain nature with some slight refection, as ane sauted herring or the like." And, uncovering the dish, he displayed four of the savvoury fishes which he mentioned, adding, in a subdued tone, "that they were no just common herring neither, being every ane melters, and sauted with uncommon care by the housekeeper (poor Mysie) for his honour's especial use."

"Out upon all apologies!" said the Master, "let us eat the herrings, since there is nothing better to be had — but I begin to think with you, Bucklaw, that we are consuming the last green leaf, and that, in spite of the Marquis's political machinations, we must positively shift camp for want of forage, without waiting the issue of them."

CHAPTER IX.

> Ay, and when huntsmen wind the merry horn,
> And from its covert starts the fearful prey,
> Who, warm'd with youth's blood in his swelling veins,
> Would, like a lifeless clod, outstretched lie,
> Shut out from all the fair creation offers?
>
> *Ethwald, Act I. Scene I.*

LIGHT meals procure light slumbers; and therefore it is not surprising, that, considering the fare which Caleb's conscience, or his necessity, assuming, as will sometimes happen, that disguise, had assigned to the guests of Wolf's Crag, their slumbers should have been short.

In the morning Bucklaw rushed into his host's apartment with a loud halloo, which might have awaked the dead.

"Up! up! in the name of Heaven—the hunters are out, the only piece of sport I have seen this month; and you lie here, Master, on a bed that has little to recommend it, except that it may be something softer than the stone floor of your ancestor's vault."

"I wish," said Ravenswood, raising his head peevishly, "you had forborne so early a jest, Mr. Hayston — it is really no pleasure to lose the very short repose which I had just begun to enjoy, after a night spent in thoughts upon fortune far harder than my couch, Bucklaw."

"Pshaw, pshaw!" replied his guest; "get up — get up — the hounds are abroad — I have saddled the horses myself, for old Caleb was calling for

grooms and lackeys, and would never have proceeded without two hours' apology, for the absence of men that were a hundred miles off. — Get up, Master — I say the hounds are out — get up, I say — the hunt is up." And off ran Bucklaw.

"And I say," said the Master, rising slowly, "that nothing can concern me less. Whose hounds come so near to us?"

"The Honourable Lord Bittlebrains'," answered Caleb, who had followed the impatient Laird of Bucklaw into his master's bedroom, "and truly I ken nae title they have to be yowling and howling within the freedoms and immunities of your lordship's right of free forestry."

"Nor I, Caleb," replied Ravenswood, "excepting that they have bought both the lands and the right of forestry, and may think themselves entitled to exercise the rights they have paid their money for."

"It may be sae, my lord," replied Caleb; "but it's no gentleman's deed of them to come here and exercise such like right, and your lordship living at your ain castle of Wolf's Crag. Lord Bittlebrains would do weel to remember what his folk have been."

"And we what we now are," said the Master, with suppressed bitterness of feeling. "But reach me my cloak, Caleb, and I will indulge Bucklaw with a sight of this chase. It is selfish to sacrifice my guest's pleasure to my own."

"Sacrifice!" echoed Caleb, in a tone which seemed to imply the total absurdity of his master making the least concession in deference to any one—"Sacrifice, indeed! — but I crave your honour's pardon — and whilk doublet is it your pleasure to wear?"

"Any one you will, Caleb — my wardrobe, I suppose, is not very extensive."

"Not extensive!" echoed his assistant; "when there is the grey and silver that your lordship bestowed on Hew Hildebrand, your outrider — and the French velvet that went with my lord your father — (be gracious to him!) — my lord your father's auld wardrobe to the puir friends of the family, and the drap-de-berry" —

"Which I gave to you, Caleb, and which, I suppose, is the only dress we have any chance to come at, except that I wore yesterday — pray, hand me that, and say no more about it."

"If your honour has a fancy," replied Caleb, "and doubtless it's a sad-coloured suit, and you are in mourning — nevertheless, I have never tried on the drap-de-berry — ill wad it become me — and your honour having no change of claiths at this present — and it's weel brushed, and as there are leddies down yonder" —

"Ladies!" said Ravenswood; "and what ladies, pray?"

"What do I ken, your lordship? — looking down at them from the Warden's Tower, I could but see them glent by wi' their bridles ringing, and their feathers fluttering, like the court of Elfland."

"Well, well, Caleb," replied the Master, "help me on with my cloak, and hand me my sword-belt. — What clatter is that in the court-yard?"

"Just Bucklaw bringing out the horses," said Caleb, after a glance through the window, "as if there werena men eneugh in the castle, or as if I couldna serve the turn of ony o' them that are out o' the gate."

"Alas! Caleb, we should want little, if your ability were equal to your will," replied his master.

"And I hope your lordship disna want that

muckle," said Caleb; "for, considering a' things, I trust we support the credit of the family as weel as things will permit of, — only Bucklaw is aye sae frank and sae forward.— And there he has brought out your lordship's palfrey, without the saddle being decored wi' the broidered sumpter-cloth! and I could have brushed it in a minute."

"It is all very well," said his master, escaping from him, and descending the narrow and steep winding staircase, which led to the court-yard.

"It *may* be a' very weel," said Caleb, somewhat peevishly; "but if your lordship wad tarry a bit, I will tell you what will *not* be very weel."

"And what is that?" said Ravenswood, impatiently, but stopping at the same time.

"Why, just that ye suld speer ony gentleman hame to dinner; for I canna mak anither fast on a feast day, as when I cam ower Bucklaw wi' Queen Margaret — and, to speak truth, if your lordship wad but please to cast yoursell in the way of dining wi' Lord Bittlebrains, I'se warrand I wad cast about brawly for the morn; or if, stead o' that, ye wad but dine wi' them at the change-house, ye might mak your shift for the lawing; ye might say ye had forgot your purse — or that the carline awed ye rent, and that ye wad allow it in the settlement."

"Or any other lie that came uppermost, I suppose?" said his master. "Good by, Caleb; I commend your care for the honour of the family." And, throwing himself on his horse, he followed Bucklaw, who, at the manifest risk of his neck, had begun to gallop down the steep path which led from the Tower, as soon as he saw Ravenswood have his foot in the stirrup.

Caleb Balderstone looked anxiously after them, and shook his thin grey locks — "And I trust they will come to no evil — but they have reached the plain, and folk cannot say but that the horse are hearty and in spirits."

Animated by the natural impetuosity and fire of his temper, young Bucklaw rushed on with the careless speed of a whirlwind. Ravenswood was scarce more moderate in his pace, for his was a mind unwillingly roused from contemplative inactivity, but which, when once put into motion, acquired a spirit of forcible and violent progression. Neither was his eagerness proportioned in all cases to the motive of impulse, but might be compared to the speed of a stone, which rushes with like fury down the hill, whether it was first put in motion by the arm of a giant or the hand of a boy. He felt, therefore, in no ordinary degree, the headlong impulse of the chase, a pastime so natural to youth of all ranks, that it seems rather to be an inherent passion in our animal nature, which levels all differences of rank and education, than an acquired habit of rapid exercise.

The repeated bursts of the French horn, which was then always used for the encouragement and direction of the hounds — the deep, though distant baying of the pack — the half-heard cries of the huntsmen — the half-seen forms which were discovered, now emerging from glens which crossed the moor, now sweeping over its surface, now picking their way where it was impeded by morasses; and, above all, the feeling of his own rapid motion, animated the Master of Ravenswood, at least for the moment, above the recollections of a more painful nature by which he was surrounded. The first

thing which recalled him to those unpleasing circumstances, was feeling that his horse, notwithstanding all the advantages which he received from his rider's knowledge of the country, was unable to keep up with the chase. As he drew his bridle up with the bitter feeling, that his poverty excluded him from the favourite recreation of his forefathers, and indeed their sole employment when not engaged in military pursuits, he was accosted by a well-mounted stranger, who, unobserved, had kept near him during the earlier part of his career.

"Your horse is blown," said the man, with a complaisance seldom used in a hunting-field. "Might I crave your honour to make use of mine?"

"Sir," said Ravenswood, more surprised than pleased at such a proposal, "I really do not know how I have merited such a favour at a stranger's hands."

"Never ask a question about it, Master," said Bucklaw, who, with great unwillingness, had hitherto reined in his own gallant steed, not to outride his host and entertainer. "Take the goods the gods provide you, as the great John Dryden says — or stay — here, my friend, lend me that horse; I see you have been puzzled to rein him up this half hour. I'll take the devil out of him for you. Now, Master, do you ride mine, which will carry you like an eagle."

And throwing the rein of his own horse to the Master of Ravenswood, he sprung upon that which the stranger resigned to him, and continued his career at full speed.

"Was ever so thoughtless a being!" said the Master; "and you, my friend, how could you trust him with your horse?"

"The horse," said the man, "belongs to a person who will make your honour, or any of your honourable friends, most welcome to him, flesh and fell."

"And the owner's name is ——?" asked Ravenswood.

"Your honour must excuse me, you will learn that from himself.—If you please to take your friend's horse, and leave me your galloway, I will meet you after the fall of the stag, for I hear they are blowing him at bay."

"I believe, my friend, it will be the best way to recover your good horse for you," answered Ravenswood; and mounting the nag of his friend Bucklaw, he made all the haste in his power to the spot where the blast of the horn announced that the stag's career was nearly terminated.

These jovial sounds were intermixed with the huntsmen's shouts of "Hyke a Talbot! Hyke a Teviot! now, boys, now!" and similar cheering halloos of the olden hunting-field, to which the impatient yelling of the hounds, now close on the object of their pursuit, gave a lively and unremitting chorus. The straggling riders began now to rally towards the scene of action, collecting from different points as to a common centre.

Bucklaw kept the start which he had gotten, and arrived first at the spot, where the stag, incapable of sustaining a more prolonged flight, had turned upon the hounds, and, in the hunter's phrase, was at bay. With his stately head bent down, his sides white with foam, his eyes strained betwixt rage and terror, the hunted animal had now in his turn become an object of intimidation to his pursuers. The hunters came up one by one, and watched an oppor-

tunity to assail him with some advantage, which, in such circumstances, can only be done with caution. The dogs stood aloof and bayed loudly, intimating at once eagerness and fear, and each of the sportsmen seemed to expect that his comrade would take upon him the perilous task of assaulting and disabling the animal. The ground, which was a hollow in the common or moor, afforded little advantage for approaching the stag unobserved; and general was the shout of triumph when Bucklaw, with the dexterity proper to an accomplished cavalier of the day, sprang from his horse, and dashing suddenly and swiftly at the stag, brought him to the ground by a cut on the hind leg with his short hunting sword. The pack, rushing in upon their disabled enemy, soon ended his painful struggles, and solemnized his fall with their clamour — the hunters, with their horns and voices, whooping and blowing a *mort*, or death-note, which resounded far over the billows of the adjacent ocean.

The huntsman then withdrew the hounds from the throttled stag, and on his knee presented his knife to a fair female form, on a white palfrey, whose terror, or perhaps her compassion, had till then kept her at some distance. She wore a black silk riding-mask, which was then a common fashion, as well for preserving the complexion from sun and rain, as from an idea of decorum, which did not permit a lady to appear barefaced while engaged in a boisterous sport, and attended by a promiscuous company. The richness of her dress, however, as well as the mettle and form of her palfrey, together with the silvan compliment paid to her by the huntsman, pointed her out to Bucklaw as the principal person in the field. It was not without a feeling of pity,

approaching even to contempt, that this enthusiastic hunter observed her refuse the huntsman's knife, presented to her for the purpose of making the first incision in the stag's breast, and thereby discovering the quality of the venison. He felt more than half inclined to pay his compliments to her; but it had been Bucklaw's misfortune, that his habits of life had not rendered him familiarly acquainted with the higher and better classes of female society, so that, with all his natural audacity, he felt sheepish and bashful when it became necessary to address a lady of distinction.

Taking unto himself heart of grace, (to use his own phrase,) he did at length summon up resolution enough to give the fair huntress good time of the day, and trust that her sport had answered her expectation. Her answer was very courteously and modestly expressed, and testified some gratitude to the gallant cavalier, whose exploit had terminated the chase so adroitly, when the hounds and huntsmen seemed somewhat at a stand.

"Uds daggers and scabbard, madam," said Bucklaw, whom this observation brought at once upon his own ground, "there is no difficulty or merit in that matter at all, so that a fellow is not too much afraid of having a pair of antlers in his guts. I have hunted at force five hundred times, madam; and I never yet saw the stag at bay, by land or water, but I durst have gone roundly in on him. It is all use and wont, madam; and I'll tell you, madam, for all that, it must be done with good heed and caution; and you will do well, madam, to have your hunting-sword both right sharp and double-edged, that you may strike either fore-handed or back-handed, as you see reason, for a hurt with

a buck's horn is a perilous and somewhat venomous matter."

"I am afraid, sir," said the young lady, and her smile was scarce concealed by her vizard, "I shall have little use for such careful preparation."

"But the gentleman says very right for all that, my lady," said an old huntsman, who had listened to Bucklaw's harangue with no small edification; "and I have heard my father say, who was a forester at the Cabrach, that a wild boar's gaunch is more easily healed than a hurt from the deer's horn, for so says the old woodman's rhyme, —

'If thou be hurt with horn of hart, it brings thee to thy bier;
But tusk of boar shall leeches heal—thereof have lesser fear.'"

"An I might advise," continued Bucklaw, who was now in his element, and desirous of assuming the whole management, "as the hounds are surbated and weary, the head of the stag should be cabaged in order to reward them; and if I may presume to speak, the huntsman, who is to break up the stag, ought to drink to your good ladyship's health a good lusty bicker of ale, or a tass of brandy; for if he breaks him up without drinking, the venison will not keep well."

This very agreeable prescription received, as will be readily believed, all acceptation from the huntsman, who, in requital, offered to Bucklaw the compliment of his knife, which the young lady had declined. This polite proffer was seconded by his mistress.

"I believe, sir," she said, withdrawing herself from the circle," that my father, for whose amusement Lord Bittlebrains' hounds have been out to-day, will read-

ily surrender all care of these matters to a gentleman of your experience."

Then, bending gracefully from her horse, she wished him good morning, and, attended by one or two domestics, who seemed immediately attached to her service, retired from the scene of action, to which Bucklaw, too much delighted with an opportunity of displaying his wood-craft to care about man or woman either, paid little attention ; but was soon stript to his doublet, with tucked-up sleeves, and naked arms up to the elbows in blood and grease, slashing, cutting, hacking, and hewing, with the precision of Sir Tristrem himself, and wrangling and disputing with all around him concerning nombles, briskets, flankards, and raven-bones, then usual terms of the art of hunting, or of butchery, whichever the reader chooses to call it, which are now probably antiquated.

When Ravenswood, who followed a short space behind his friend, saw that the stag had fallen, his temporary ardour for the chase gave way to that feeling of reluctance which he endured, at encountering in his fallen fortunes the gaze whether of equals or inferiors. He reined up his horse on the top of a gentle eminence, from which he observed the busy and gay scene beneath him, and heard the whoops of the huntsmen gaily mingled with the cry of the dogs, and the neighing and trampling of the horses. But these jovial sounds fell sadly on the ear of the ruined nobleman. The chase, with all its train of excitations, has ever since feudal times been accounted the almost exclusive privilege of the aristocracy, and was anciently their chief employment in times of peace. The sense that he was excluded by his situation from enjoying the silvan sport,

which his rank assigned to him as a special prerogative, and the feeling that new men were now exercising it over the downs, which had been jealously reserved by his ancestors for their own amusement, while he, the heir of the domain, was fain to hold himself at a distance from their party, awakened reflections calculated to depress deeply a mind like Ravenswood's, which was naturally contemplative and melancholy. His pride, however, soon shook off this feeling of dejection, and it gave way to impatience upon finding that his volatile friend Bucklaw seemed in no hurry to return with his borrowed steed, which Ravenswood, before leaving the field, wished to see restored to the obliging owner. As he was about to move towards the group of assembled huntsmen, he was joined by a horseman, who like himself had kept aloof during the fall of the deer.

This personage seemed stricken in years. He wore a scarlet cloak, buttoning high upon his face, and his hat was unlooped and slouched, probably by way of defence against the weather. His horse, a strong and steady palfrey, was calculated for a rider who proposed to witness the sport of the day, rather than to share it. An attendant waited at some distance, and the whole equipment was that of an elderly gentleman of rank and fashion. He accosted Ravenswood very politely, but not without some embarrassment.

"You seem a gallant young gentleman, sir," he said, "and yet appear as indifferent to this brave sport as if you had my load of years on your shoulders."

"I have followed the sport with more spirit on other occasions," replied the Master; "at present, late events in my family must be my apology—

and besides," he added, "I was but indifferently mounted at the beginning of the sport."

"I think," said the stranger, "one of my attendants had the sense to accommodate your friend with a horse."

"I was much indebted to his politeness and yours," replied Ravenswood. "My friend is Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw, whom I daresay you will be sure to find in the thick of the keenest sportsmen. He will return your servant's horse, and take my pony in exchange — and will add," he concluded, turning his horse's head from the stranger, "his best acknowledgments to mine for the accommodation."

The Master of Ravenswood having thus expressed himself, began to move homeward, with the manner of one who has taken leave of his company. But the stranger was not so to be shaken off. He turned his horse at the same time, and rode in the same direction so near to the Master, that, without outriding him, which the formal civility of the time, and the respect due to the stranger's age and recent civility, would have rendered improper, he could not easily escape from his company.

The stranger did not long remain silent. "This, then," he said, "is the ancient Castle of Wolf's Crag, often mentioned in the Scottish records," looking to the old tower, then darkening under the influence of a stormy cloud, that formed its background; for at the distance of a short mile, the chase, having been circuitous, had brought the hunters nearly back to the point which they had attained, when Ravenswood and Bucklaw had set forward to join them.

Ravenswood answered this observation with a cold and distant assent.

"It was, as I have heard," continued the stranger, unabashed by his coldness, "one of the most early possessions of the honourable family of Ravenswood."

"Their earliest possession," answered the Master, "and probably their latest."

"I — I — I should hope not, sir," answered the stranger, clearing his voice with more than one cough, and making an effort to overcome a certain degree of hesitation, — "Scotland knows what she owes to this ancient family, and remembers their frequent and honourable achievements. I have little doubt, that, were it properly represented to her majesty that so ancient and noble a family were subjected to dilapidation — I mean to decay — means might be found, *ad re-ædificandum antiquam domum*" ——

"I will save you the trouble, sir, of discussing this point farther," interrupted the Master, haughtily. "I am the heir of that unfortunate House — I am the Master of Ravenswood. And you, sir, who seem to be a gentleman of fashion and education, must be sensible, that the next mortification after being unhappy, is the being loaded with undesired commiseration."

"I beg your pardon, sir," said the elder horseman — "I did not know — I am sensible I ought not to have mentioned — nothing could be farther from my thoughts than to suppose" ——

"There are no apologies necessary, sir," answered Ravenswood, "for here, I suppose, our roads separate, and I assure you that we part in perfect equanimity on my side."

As speaking these words, he directed his horse's head towards a narrow causeway, the ancient ap-

proach to Wolf's Crag, of which it might be truly said, in the words of the Bard of Hope, that

> "Frequented by few was the grass-cover'd road,
> Where the hunter of deer and the warrior trode,
> To his hills that encircle the sea."

But, ere he could disengage himself from his companion, the young lady we have already mentioned came up to join the stranger, followed by her servants.

"Daughter," said the stranger to the masked damsel, "this is the Master of Ravenswood."

It would have been natural that the gentleman should have replied to this introduction; but there was something in the graceful form and retiring modesty of the female to whom he was thus presented, which not only prevented him from enquiring to whom, and by whom, the annunciation had been made, but which even for the time struck him absolutely mute. At this moment the cloud which had long lowered above the height on which Wolf's Crag is situated, and which now, as it advanced, spread itself in darker and denser folds both over land and sea, hiding the distant objects and obscuring those which were nearer, turning the sea to a leaden complexion, and the heath to a darker brown, began now, by one or two distant peals, to announce the thunders with which it was fraught; while two flashes of lightning, following each other very closely, showed in the distance the grey turrets of Wolf's Crag, and, more nearly, the rolling billows of the ocean, crested suddenly with red and dazzling light.

The horse of the fair huntress showed symptoms of impatience and restiveness, and it became im-

possible for Ravenswood, as a man or a gentleman, to leave her abruptly to the care of an aged father or her menial attendants. He was, or believed himself, obliged in courtesy to take hold of her bridle, and assist her in managing the unruly animal. While he was thus engaged, the old gentleman observed that the storm seemed to increase — that they were far from Lord Bittlebrains', whose guests they were for the present — and that he would be obliged to the Master of Ravenswood to point him the way to the nearest place of refuge from the storm. At the same time he cast a wistful and embarrassed look towards the Tower of Wolf's Crag, which seemed to render it almost impossible for the owner to avoid offering an old man and a lady, in such an emergency, the temporary use of his house. Indeed, the condition of the young huntress made this courtesy indispensable; for, in the course of the services which he rendered, he could not but perceive that she trembled much, and was extremely agitated, from her apprehensions, doubtless, of the coming storm.

I know not if the Master of Ravenswood shared her terrors, but he was not entirely free from something like a similar disorder of nerves, as he observed, "The Tower of Wolf's Crag has nothing to offer beyond the shelter of its roof, but if that can be acceptable at such a moment" — he paused, as if the rest of the invitation stuck in his throat. But the old gentleman, his self-constituted companion, did not allow him to recede from the invitation, which he had rather suffered to be implied than directly expressed.

"The storm," said the stranger, "must be an apology for waving ceremony — his daughter's

health was weak — she had suffered much from a recent alarm — he trusted their intrusion on the Master of Ravenswood's hospitality would not be altogether unpardonable in the circumstances of the case — his child's safety must be dearer to him than ceremony."

There was no room to retreat. The Master of Ravenswood led the way, continuing to keep hold of the lady's bridle to prevent her horse from starting at some unexpected explosion of thunder. He was not so bewildered in his own hurried reflections, but that he remarked, that the deadly paleness which had occupied her neck and temples, and such of her features as the riding-mask left exposed, gave place to a deep and rosy suffusion; and he felt with embarrassment that a flush was by tacit sympathy excited in his own cheeks. The stranger, with watchfulness which he disguised under apprehensions for the safety of his daughter, continued to observe the expression of the Master's countenance as they ascended the hill to Wolf's Crag. When they stood in front of that ancient fortress, Ravenswood's emotions were of a very complicated description; and as he led the way into the rude court-yard, and halloo'd to Caleb to give attendance, there was a tone of sternness, almost of fierceness, which seemed somewhat alien from the courtesies of one who is receiving honoured guests.

Caleb came; and not the paleness of the fair stranger at the first approach of the thunder, nor the paleness of any other person, in any other circumstances whatever, equalled that which overcame the thin cheeks of the disconsolate seneschal, when he beheld this accession of guests to the

castle, and reflected that the dinner hour was fast approaching. "Is he daft?" he muttered to himself, — "is he clean daft a'thegither, to bring lords and leddies, and a host of folk behint them, and twal-o'-clock chappit?" Then approaching the Master, he craved pardon for having permitted the rest of his people to go out to see the hunt, observing, that "they wad never think of his lordship coming back till mirk night, and that he dreaded they might play the truant."

"Silence, Balderstone!" said Ravenswood, sternly; "your folly is unseasonable. — Sir and madam," he said, turning to his guests, "this old man, and a yet older and more imbecile female domestic, form my whole retinue. Our means of refreshing you are more scanty than even so miserable a retinue, and a dwelling so dilapidated, might seem to promise you; but, such as they may chance to be, you may command them."

The elder stranger, struck with the ruined and even savage appearance of the Tower, rendered still more disconsolate by the lowering and gloomy sky, and perhaps not altogether unmoved by the grave and determined voice in which their host addressed them, looked round him anxiously, as if he half repented the readiness with which he had accepted the offered hospitality. But there was now no opportunity of receding from the situation in which he had placed himself.

As for Caleb, he was so utterly stunned by his master's public and unqualified acknowledgment of the nakedness of the land, that for two minutes he could only mutter within his hebdomadal beard, which had not felt the razor for six days, "He's daft — clean daft — red wud, and awa wi't! But

deil hae Caleb Balderstone," said he, collecting his powers of invention and resource, "if the family shall lose credit, if he were as mad as the seven wise masters!" He then boldly advanced, and in spite of his master's frowns and impatience, gravely asked, "if he should not serve up some slight refection for the young leddy, and a glass of tokay, or old sack — or" ——

"Truce to this ill-timed foolery," said the Master, sternly, — "put the horses into the stable, and interrupt us no more with your absurdities."

"Your honour's pleasure is to be obeyed aboon a' things," said Caleb; "nevertheless, as for the sack and tokay which it is not your noble guests' pleasure to accept" ——

But here the voice of Bucklaw, heard even above the clattering of hoofs and braying of horns with which it mingled, announced that he was scaling the pathway to the Tower at the head of the greater part of the gallant hunting train.

"The deil be in me," said Caleb, taking heart in spite of this new invasion of Philistines, "if they shall beat me yet! The hellicat ne'er-do-weel! — to bring such a crew here, that will expect to find brandy as plenty as ditch-water, and he kenning sae absolutely the case in whilk we stand for the present! But I trow, could I get rid of thae gaping gowks of flunkies that hae won into the court-yard at the back of their betters, as mony a man gets preferment, I could make a' right yet."

The measures which he took to execute this dauntless resolution, the reader shall learn in the next chapter.

CHAPTER X.

With throat unslaked, with black lips baked,
  Agape they heard him call;
Gramercy they for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew in,
  As they had been drinking all!
    COLERIDGE'S "*Rime of the Ancient Mariner.*"

HAYSTON of Bucklaw was one of the thoughtless class who never hesitate between their friend and their jest. When it was announced that the principal persons of the chase had taken their route towards Wolf's Crag, the huntsmen, as a point of civility, offered to transfer the venison to that mansion; a proffer which was readily accepted by Bucklaw, who thought much of the astonishment which their arrival in full body would occasion poor old Caleb Balderstone, and very little of the dilemma to which he was about to expose his friend the Master, so ill circumstanced to receive such a party. But in old Caleb he had to do with a crafty and alert antagonist, prompt at supplying, upon all emergencies, evasions and excuses suitable, as he thought, to the dignity of the family.

"Praise be blest!" said Caleb to himself, "ae leaf of the muckle gate has been swung to wi' yestreen's wind, and I think I can manage to shut the ither."

But he was desirous, like a prudent governor, at the same time to get rid, if possible, of the internal enemy, in which light he considered almost every

one who eat and drank, ere he took measures to exclude those whom their jocund noise now pronounced to be near at hand. He waited, therefore, with impatience until his master had shown his two principal guests into the Tower, and then commenced his operations.

"I think," he said to the stranger menials, "that as they are bringing the stag's head to the castle in all honour, we, who are in-dwellers, should receive them at the gate."

The unwary grooms had no sooner hurried out, in compliance with this insidious hint, than, one folding-door of the ancient gate being already closed by the wind, as has been already intimated, honest Caleb lost no time in shutting the other with a clang, which resounded from donjon-vault to battlement. Having thus secured the pass, he forthwith indulged the excluded huntsmen in brief parley, from a small projecting window, or shot-hole, through which, in former days, the warders were wont to reconnoitre those who presented themselves before the gates. He gave them to understand, in a short and pithy speech, that the gate of the castle was never on any account opened during meal-times — that his honour, the Master of Ravenswood, and some guests of quality, had just sat down to dinner — that there was excellent brandy at the hostler-wife's at Wolf's-hope down below — and he held out some obscure hint that the reckoning would be discharged by the Master; but this was uttered in a very dubious and oracular strain, for, like Louis XIV., Caleb Balderstone hesitated to carry finesse so far as direct falsehood, and was content to deceive, if possible, without directly lying.

This annunciation was received with surprise by

some, with laughter by others, and with dismay by the expelled lackeys, who endeavoured to demonstrate that their right of re-admission, for the purpose of waiting upon their master and mistress, was at least indisputable. But Caleb was not in a humour to understand or admit any distinctions. He stuck to his original proposition with that dogged, but convenient pertinacity, which is armed against all conviction, and deaf to all reasoning. Bucklaw now came from the rear of the party, and demanded admittance in a very angry tone. But the resolution of Caleb was immovable.

"If the king on the throne were at the gate," he declared, "his ten fingers should never open it contrair to the established use and wont of the family of Ravenswood, and his duty as their head-servant."

Bucklaw was now extremely incensed, and with more oaths and curses than we care to repeat, declared himself most unworthily treated, and demanded peremptorily to speak with the Master of Ravenswood himself. But to this, also, Caleb turned a deaf ear.

"He's as soon a-bleeze as a tap of tow the lad Bucklaw," he said; "but the deil of ony master's face he shall see till he has sleepit and waken'd on't. He'll ken himsell better the morn's morning. It sets the like o' him, to be bringing a crew of drunken hunters here, when he kens there is but little preparation to sloken his ain drought." And he disappeared from the window, leaving them all to digest their exclusion as they best might.

But another person, of whose presence Caleb, in the animation of the debate, was not aware, had listened in silence to its progress. This was the principal domestic of the stranger — a man of trust and

consequence — the same, who, in the hunting-field, had accommodated Bucklaw with the use of his horse. He was in the stable when Caleb had contrived the expulsion of his fellow-servants, and thus avoided sharing the same fate from which his personal importance would certainly not have otherwise saved him.

This personage perceived the manœuvre of Caleb, easily appreciated the motive of his conduct, and knowing his master's intentions towards the family of Ravenswood, had no difficulty as to the line of conduct he ought to adopt. He took the place of Caleb (unperceived by the latter) at the post of audience which he had just left, and announced to the assembled domestics, "that it was his master's pleasure that Lord Bittlebrains' retinue and his own should go down to the adjacent change-house, and call for what refreshments they might have occasion for, and he should take care to discharge the lawing."

The jolly troop of huntsmen retired from the inhospitable gate of Wolf's Crag, execrating, as they descended the steep path-way, the niggard and unworthy disposition of the proprietor, and damning, with more than silvan license, both the castle and its inhabitants. Bucklaw, with many qualities which would have made him a man of worth and judgment in more favourable circumstances, had been so utterly neglected in point of education, that he was apt to think and feel according to the ideas of the companions of his pleasures. The praises which had recently been heaped upon himself he contrasted with the general abuse now levelled against Ravenswood — he recalled to his mind the dull and monotonous days he had spent in the

Tower of Wolf's Crag, compared with the jovialty of his usual life — he felt, with great indignation, his exclusion from the castle, which he considered as a gross affront, and every mingled feeling led him to break off the union which he had formed with the Master of Ravenswood.

On arriving at the change-house of the village of Wolf's-hope, he unexpectedly met with an old acquaintance just alighting from his horse. This was no other than the very respectable Captain Craigengelt, who immediately came up to him, and, without appearing to retain any recollection of the indifferent terms on which they had parted, shook him by the hand in the warmest manner possible. A warm grasp of the hand was what Bucklaw could never help returning with cordiality, and no sooner had Craigengelt felt the pressure of his fingers than he knew the terms on which he stood with him.

"Long life to you, Bucklaw!" he exclaimed; "there's life for honest folk in this bad world yet!"

The Jacobites at this period, with what propriety I know not, used, it must be noticed, the term of *honest men* as peculiarly descriptive of their own party.

"Ay, and for others besides, it seems," answered Bucklaw; "otherways, how came you to venture hither, noble Captain?"

"Who — I? — I am as free as the wind at Martinmas, that pays neither land-rent nor annual; all is explained — all settled with the honest old drivellers yonder of Auld Reekie — Pooh! pooh! they dared not keep me a week of days in durance. A certain person has better friends among them than you wot of, and can serve a friend when it is least likely."

"Pshaw!" answered Hayston, who perfectly knew and thoroughly despised the character of this man, "none of your cogging gibberish — tell me truly, are you at liberty and in safety?"

"Free and safe as a whig bailie on the causeway of his own borough, or a canting presbyterian minister in his own pulpit — and I came to tell you that you need not remain in hiding any longer."

"Then I suppose you call yourself my friend, Captain Craigengelt?" said Bucklaw.

"Friend!" replied Craigengelt, "my cock of the pit? why, I am thy very Achates, man, as I have heard scholars say — hand and glove — bark and tree — thine to life and death!"

"I'll try that in a moment," answered Bucklaw. "Thou art never without money, however thou comest by it. Lend me two pieces to wash the dust out of these honest fellows' throats in the first place, and then" ——

"Two pieces? twenty are at thy service, my lad — and twenty to back them."

"Ay — say you so?" said Bucklaw, pausing, for his natural penetration led him to suspect some extraordinary motive lay couched under such an excess of generosity. "Craigengelt, you are either an honest fellow in right good earnest, and I scarce know how to believe that — or you are cleverer than I took you for, and I scarce know how to believe that either."

"*L'un n'empeche pas l'autre,*" said Craigengelt, "touch and try — the gold is good as ever was weighed."

He put a quantity of gold pieces into Bucklaw's hand, which he thrust into his pocket without either counting or looking at them, only observing, "that

he was so circumstanced that he must enlist, though the devil offered the press-money;" and then turning to the huntsmen, he called out, "Come along, my lads — all is at my cost."

"Long life to Bucklaw!" shouted the men of the chase.

"And confusion to him that takes his share of the sport, and leaves the hunters as dry as a drum-head," added another, by way of corollary.

"The house of Ravenswood was ance a gude and an honourable house in this land," said an old man, "but it's lost its credit this day, and the Master has shown himself no better than a greedy cullion."

And with this conclusion, which was unanimously agreed to by all who heard it, they rushed tumultuously into the house of entertainment, where they revelled till a late hour. The jovial temper of Bucklaw seldom permitted him to be nice in the choice of his associates; and on the present occasion, when his joyous debauch received additional zest from the intervention of an unusual space of sobriety, and almost abstinence, he was as happy in leading the revels, as if his comrades had been sons of princes. Craigengelt had his own purposes, in fooling him up to the top of his bent; and having some low humour, much impudence, and the power of singing a good song, understanding besides thoroughly the disposition of his regained associate, he readily succeeded in involving him bumper-deep in the festivity of the meeting.

A very different scene was in the meantime passing in the Tower of Wolf's Crag. When the Master of Ravenswood left the court-yard, too much busied with his own perplexed reflections to pay

attention to the manœuvre of Caleb, he ushered his guests into the great hall of the castle.

The indefatigable Balderstone, who, from choice or habit, worked on from morning to night, had, by degrees, cleared this desolate apartment of the confused relics of the funeral banquet, and restored it to some order. But not all his skill and labour, in disposing to advantage the little furniture which remained, could remove the dark and disconsolate appearance of those ancient and disfurnished walls. The narrow windows, flanked by deep indentures into the wall, seemed formed rather to exclude than to admit the cheerful light; and the heavy and gloomy appearance of the thunder-sky added still farther to the obscurity.

As Ravenswood, with the grace of a gallant of that period, but not without a certain stiffness and embarrassment of manner, handed the young lady to the upper end of the apartment, her father remained standing more near to the door, as if about to disengage himself from his hat and cloak. At this moment the clang of the portal was heard, a sound at which the stranger started, stepped hastily to the window, and looked with an air of alarm at Ravenswood, when he saw that the gate of the court was shut, and his domestics excluded.

"You have nothing to fear, sir," said Ravenswood, gravely; "this roof retains the means of giving protection, though not welcome. Methinks," he added, "it is time that I should know who they are that have thus highly honoured my ruined dwelling?"

The young lady remained silent and motionless, and the father, to whom the question was more directly addressed, seemed in the situation of a per-

former who has ventured to take upon himself a part which he finds himself unable to present, and who comes to a pause when it is most to be expected that he should speak. While he endeavoured to cover his embarrassment with the exterior ceremonials of a well-bred demeanour, it was obvious, that in making his bow, one foot shuffled forward, as if to advance — the other backward, as if with the purpose of escape — and as he undid the cape of his coat, and raised his beaver from his face, his fingers fumbled as if the one had been linked with rusted iron, or the other had weighed equal with a stone of lead. The darkness of the sky seemed to increase, as if to supply the want of those mufflings which he laid aside with such evident reluctance. The impatience of Ravenswood increased also in proportion to the delay of the stranger, and he appeared to struggle under agitation, though probably from a very different cause. He laboured to restrain his desire to speak, while the stranger, to all appearance, was at a loss for words to express what he felt it necessary to say. At length Ravenswood's impatience broke the bounds he had imposed upon it.

"I perceive," he said, "that Sir William Ashton is unwilling to announce himself in the Castle of Wolf's Crag."

"I had hoped it was unnecessary," said the Lord Keeper, relieved from his silence, as a spectre by the voice of the exorcist; "and I am obliged to you, Master of Ravenswood, for breaking the ice at once, where circumstances — unhappy circumstances, let me call them — rendered self-introduction peculiarly awkward."

"And I am not then," said the Master of Ravens-

wood, gravely, "to consider the honour of this visit as purely accidental?"

"Let us distinguish a little," said the Keeper, assuming an appearance of ease which perhaps his heart was a stranger to; "this is an honour which I have eagerly desired for some time, but which I might never have obtained, save for the accident of the storm. My daughter and I are alike grateful for this opportunity of thanking the brave man, to whom she owes her life and I mine."

The hatred which divided the great families in the feudal times had lost little of its bitterness, though it no longer expressed itself in deeds of open violence. Not the feelings which Ravenswood had begun to entertain towards Lucy Ashton, not the hospitality due to his guests, were able entirely to subdue, though they warmly combated, the deep passions which arose within him, at beholding his father's foe standing in the hall of the family of which he had in a great measure accelerated the ruin. His looks glanced from the father to the daughter with an irresolution, of which Sir William Ashton did not think it proper to await the conclusion. He had now disembarrassed himself of his riding-dress, and walking up to his daughter, he undid the fastening of her mask.

"Lucy, my love," he said, raising her and leading her towards Ravenswood, "lay aside your mask, and let us express our gratitude to the Master openly and barefaced."

"If he will condescend to accept it," was all that Lucy uttered; but in a tone so sweetly modulated, and which seemed to imply at once a feeling and a forgiving of the cold reception to which they were exposed, that, coming from a creature so innocent

and so beautiful, her words cut Ravenswood to the very heart for his harshness. He muttered something of surprise, something of confusion, and, ending with a warm and eager expression of his happiness at being able to afford her shelter under his roof, he saluted her, as the ceremonial of the time enjoined upon such occasions. Their cheeks had touched and were withdrawn from each other — Ravenswood had not quitted the hand which he had taken in kindly courtesy — a blush, which attached more consequence by far than was usual to such ceremony, still mantled on Lucy Ashton's beautiful cheek, when the apartment was suddenly illuminated by a flash of lightning, which seemed absolutely to swallow the darkness of the hall. Every object might have been for an instant seen distinctly. The slight and half-sinking form of Lucy Ashton, the well-proportioned and stately figure of Ravenswood, his dark features, and the fiery, yet irresolute expression of his eyes, — the old arms and scutcheons which hung on the walls of the apartment, were for an instant distinctly visible to the Keeper by a strong red brilliant glare of light. Its disappearance was almost instantly followed by a burst of thunder, for the storm-cloud was very near the castle; and the peal was so sudden and dreadful, that the old tower rocked to its foundation, and every inmate concluded it was falling upon them. The soot, which had not been disturbed for centuries, showered down the huge tunnelled chimneys — lime and dust flew in clouds from the wall; and, whether the lightning had actually struck the castle, or whether through the violent concussion of the air, several heavy stones were hurled from the mouldering battlements into the roaring sea be-

neath. It might seem as if the ancient founder of the castle were bestriding the thunder-storm, and proclaiming his displeasure at the reconciliation of his descendant with the enemy of his house.

The consternation was general, and it required the efforts of both the Lord Keeper and Ravenswood to keep Lucy from fainting. Thus was the Master a second time engaged in the most delicate and dangerous of all tasks, that of affording support and assistance to a beautiful and helpless being, who, as seen before in a similar situation, had already become a favourite of his imagination, both when awake and when slumbering. If the Genius of the House really condemned a union betwixt the Master and his fair guest, the means by which he expressed his sentiments were as unhappily chosen as if he had been a mere mortal. The train of little attentions, absolutely necessary to soothe the young lady's mind, and aid her in composing her spirits, necessarily threw the Master of Ravenswood into such an intercourse with her father, as was calculated, for the moment at least, to break down the barrier of feudal enmity which divided them. To express himself churlishly, or even coldly, towards an old man, whose daughter (and *such* a daughter) lay before them, overpowered with natural terror — and all this under his own roof — the thing was impossible; and by the time that Lucy, extending a hand to each, was able to thank them for their kindness, the Master felt that his sentiments of hostility towards the Lord Keeper were by no means those most predominant in his bosom.

The weather, her state of health, the absence of her attendants, all prevented the possibility of Lucy

Ashton renewing her journey to Bittlebrains-House, which was full five miles distant; and the Master of Ravenswood could not but, in common courtesy, offer the shelter of his roof for the rest of the day and for the night. But a flush of less soft expression, a look much more habitual to his features, resumed predominance when he mentioned how meanly he was provided for the entertainment of his guests.

"Do not mention deficiencies," said the Lord Keeper, eager to interrupt him and prevent his resuming an alarming topic; "you are preparing to set out for the Continent, and your house is probably for the present unfurnished. All this we understand; but if you mention inconvenience, you will oblige us to seek accommodations in the hamlet."

As the Master of Ravenswood was about to reply, the door of the hall opened, and Caleb Balderstone rushed in.

CHAPTER XI.

> Let them have meat enough, woman — half a hen;
> There be old rotten pilchards —put them off too;
> 'Tis but a little new anointing of them,
> And a strong onion, that confounds the savour.
>
> *Love's Pilgrimage.*

THE thunderbolt, which had stunned all who were within hearing of it, had only served to awaken the bold and inventive genius of the flower of Majors Domo. Almost before the clatter had ceased, and while there was yet scarce an assurance whether the castle was standing or falling, Caleb exclaimed, "Heavens be praised! — this comes to hand like the boul of a pint stoup." He then barred the kitchen door in the face of the Lord Keeper's servant, whom he perceived returning from the party at the gate, and muttering, "How the deil cam he in? — but deil may care — Mysie, what are ye sitting shaking and greeting in the chimney-neuk for? Come here — or stay where ye are, and skirl as loud as ye can — it's a' ye're gude for — I say, ye auld deevil, skirl— skirl —louder —louder, woman — gar the gentles hear ye in the ha' — I have heard ye as far off as the Bass for a less matter. And stay — down wi' that crockery" —

And with a sweeping blow, he threw down from a shelf some articles of pewter and earthenware. He exalted his voice amid the clatter, shouting and roaring in a manner which changed Mysie's hyster-

ical terrors of the thunder into fears that her old fellow-servant was gone distracted. "He has dung down a' the bits o' pigs, too — the only thing we had left to haud a soup milk — and he has spilt the hatted kitt that was for the Master's dinner. Mercy save us, the auld man's gaen clean and clear wud wi' the thunner!"

"Haud your tongue, ye b——!" said Caleb, in the impetuous and overbearing triumph of successful invention, "a's provided now — dinner and a' thing — the thunner's done a' in a clap of a hand!"

"Puir man, he's muckle astray," said Mysie, looking at him with a mixture of pity and alarm; "I wish he may ever come hame to himsell again."

"Here, ye auld doited deevil," said Caleb, still exulting in his extrication from a dilemma which had seemed insurmountable; "keep the strange man out of the kitchen — swear the thunner came down the chimney, and spoiled the best dinner ye ever dressed — beef — bacon — kid — lark — leveret — wild fowl — venison, and what not. Lay it on thick, and never mind expenses. I'll awa up to the ha' — make a' the confusion ye can — but be sure ye keep out the strange servant."

With these charges to his ally, Caleb posted up to the hall, but stopping to reconnoitre through an aperture, which time, for the convenience of many a domestic in succession, had made in the door, and perceiving the situation of Miss Ashton, he had prudence enough to make a pause, both to avoid adding to her alarm, and in order to secure attention to his account of the disastrous effects of the thunder.

But when he perceived that the lady was recovered, and heard the conversation turn upon the

accommodation and refreshment which the castle afforded, he thought it time to burst into the room in the manner announced in the last chapter.

"Wull a wins! — wull a wins! such a misfortune to befa' the House of Ravenswood, and I to live to see it!"

"What is the matter, Caleb?" said his master, somewhat alarmed in his turn; "has any part of the castle fallen?"

"Castle fa'an? — na, but the sute's fa'an, and the thunner's come right down the kitchen-lumm, and the things are a' lying here awa, there awa, like the Laird o' Hotchpotch's lands — and wi' brave guests of honour and quality to entertain" — a low bow here to Sir William Ashton and his daughter — "and naething left in the house fit to present for dinner — or for supper either, for aught that I can see!"

"I verily believe you, Caleb," said Ravenswood, drily.

Balderstone here turned to his master a half-upbraiding, half-imploring countenance, and edged towards him as he repeated, "It was nae great matter of preparation; but just something added to your honour's ordinary course of fare — *petty cover*, as they say at the Louvre — three courses and the fruit."

"Keep your intolerable nonsense to yourself, you old fool!" said Ravenswood, mortified at his officiousness, yet not knowing how to contradict him, without the risk of giving rise to scenes yet more ridiculous.

Caleb saw his advantage, and resolved to improve it. But first, observing that the Lord Keeper's servant entered the apartment, and spoke apart with

his master, he took the same opportunity to whisper a few words into Ravenswood's ear — "Haud your tongue, for heaven's sake, sir — if it's my pleasure to hazard my soul in telling lees for the honour of the family, it's nae business o' yours — and if ye let me gang on quietly, I'se be moderate in my banquet; but if ye contradict me, deil but I dress ye a dinner fit for a duke!"

Ravenswood, in fact, thought it would be best to let his officious butler run on, who proceeded to enumerate upon his fingers, — "No muckle provision — might hae served four persons of honour, — first course, capons in white broth — roast kid — bacon with reverence, — second course, roasted leveret — butter crabs — a veal florentine, — third course, black-cock — it's black eneugh now wi' the sute — plumdamas — a tart — a flam — and some nonsense sweet things, and comfits — and that's a'," he said, seeing the impatience of his master; "that's just a' was o't — forby the apples and pears."

Miss Ashton had by degrees gathered her spirits, so far as to pay some attention to what was going on; and observing the restrained impatience of Ravenswood, contrasted with the peculiar determination of manner with which Caleb detailed his imaginary banquet, the whole struck her as so ridiculous, that, despite every effort to the contrary, she burst into a fit of incontrollable laughter, in which she was joined by her father, though with more moderation, and finally by the Master of Ravenswood himself, though conscious that the jest was at his own expense. Their mirth — for a scene which we read with little emotion often appears extremely ludicrous to the spectators — made the old vault ring again. They ceased — they renewed

— they ceased — they renewed again their shouts of laughter! Caleb, in the meantime, stood his ground with a grave, angry, and scornful dignity, which greatly enhanced the ridicule of the scene, and the mirth of the spectators.

At length, when the voices, and nearly the strength of the laughers, were exhausted, he exclaimed, with very little ceremony, "The deil's in the gentles! they breakfast sae lordly, that the loss of the best dinner ever cook pat fingers to, makes them as merry as if it were the best jeest in a' George Buchanan(*k*). If there was as little in your honours' wames, as there is in Caleb Balderstone's, less caickling wad serve ye on sic a gravaminous subject."

Caleb's blunt expression of resentment again awakened the mirth of the company, which, by the way, he regarded not only as an aggression upon the dignity of the family, but a special contempt of the eloquence with which he himself had summed up the extent of their supposed losses; — "a description of a dinner," as he said afterwards to Mysie, "that wad hae made a fu' man hungry, and them to sit there laughing at it!"

"But," said Miss Ashton, composing her countenance as well as she could, "are all these delicacies so totally destroyed, that no scrap can be collected?"

"Collected, my leddy! what wad ye collect out of the sute and the ass? Ye may gang down yoursell, and look into our kitchen — the cookmaid in the trembling exies — the gude vivers lying a' about — beef — capons, and white broth — florentine and flams — bacon, wi' reverence, and a' the sweet confections and whim-whams; ye'll see them a', my

leddy — that is," said he, correcting himself, "ye'll no see ony of them now, for the cook has soopit them up, as was weel her part; but ye'll see the white broth where it was spilt. I pat my fingers in it, and it tastes as like sour-milk as ony thing else; if that isna the effect of thunner, I kenna what is. — This gentleman here couldna but hear the clash of our haill dishes, china and silver thegither?"

The Lord Keeper's domestic, though a statesman's attendant, and of course trained to command his countenance upon all occasions, was somewhat discomposed by this appeal, to which he only answered by a bow.

"I think, Mr. Butler," said the Lord Keeper, who began to be afraid lest the prolongation of this scene should at length displease Ravenswood, — "I think, that were you to retire with my servant Lockhard — he has travelled, and is quite accustomed to accidents and contingencies of every kind, and I hope betwixt you, you may find out some mode of supply at this emergency."

"His honour kens," — said Caleb, who, however hopeless of himself of accomplishing what was desirable, would, like the high-spirited elephant, rather have died in the effort, than brooked the aid of a brother in commission, — "his honour kens weel I need nae counsellor, when the honour of the house is concerned."

"I should be unjust if I denied it, Caleb," said his master; "but your art lies chiefly in making apologies, upon which we can no more dine, than upon the bill of fare of our thunder-blasted dinner. Now, possibly, Mr. Lockhard's talent may consist in finding some substitute for that, which certainly is not, and has in all probability never been."

"Your honour is pleased to be facetious," said Caleb, "but I am sure, that for the warst, for a walk as far as Wolf's-hope, I could dine forty men, — no that the folk there deserve your honour's custom. They hae been ill advised in the matter of the duty-eggs and butter, I winna deny that."

"Do go consult together," said the Master, "go down to the village, and do the best you can. We must not let our guests remain without refreshment, to save the honour of a ruined family. And here, Caleb — take my purse; I believe that will prove your best ally."

"Purse? purse, indeed?" quoth Caleb, indignantly flinging out of the room, — "what suld I do wi' your honour's purse, on your ain grund? I trust we are no to pay for our ain?"

The servants left the hall; and the door was no sooner shut, than the Lord Keeper began to apologize for the rudeness of his mirth; and Lucy to hope she had given no pain or offence to the kind-hearted faithful old man.

"Caleb and I must both learn, madam, to undergo with good humour, or at least with patience, the ridicule which everywhere attaches itself to poverty."

"You do yourself injustice, Master of Ravenswood, on my word of honour," answered his elder guest. "I believe I know more of your affairs than you do yourself, and I hope to show you, that I am interested in them; and that — in short, that your prospects are better than you apprehend. In the meantime, I can conceive nothing so respectable, as the spirit which rises above misfortune, and prefers honourable privations to debt or dependence."

Whether from fear of offending the delicacy,

or awakening the pride of the Master, the Lord Keeper made these allusions with an appearance of fearful and hesitating reserve, and seemed to be afraid that he was intruding too far, in venturing to touch, however lightly, upon such a topic, even when the Master had led to it. In short, he appeared at once pushed on by his desire of appearing friendly, and held back by the fear of intrusion. It was no wonder that the Master of Ravenswood, little acquainted as he then was with life, should have given this consummate courtier credit for more sincerity than was probably to be found in a score of his cast. He answered, however, with reserve, that he was indebted to all who might think well of him; and, apologizing to his guests, he left the hall, in order to make such arrangements for their entertainment as circumstances admitted.

Upon consulting with old Mysie, the accommodations for the night were easily completed, as indeed they admitted of little choice. The Master surrendered his apartment for the use of Miss Ashton, and Mysie, (once a person of consequence,) dressed in a black satin gown which had belonged of yore to the Master's grandmother, and had figured in the court-balls of Henrietta Maria, went to attend her as lady's maid. He next enquired after Bucklaw, and understanding he was at the change-house with the huntsmen and some companions, he desired Caleb to call there, and acquaint him how he was circumstanced at Wolf's Crag — to intimate to him that it would be most convenient if he could find a bed in the hamlet, as the elder guest must necessarily be quartered in the secret chamber, the only spare bedroom which could be made fit to receive him. The Master saw no hardship in pass-

ing the night by the hall-fire, wrapt in his campaign-cloak; and to Scottish domestics of the day, even of the highest rank, nay, to young men of family or fashion, on any pinch, clean straw, or a dry hay-loft, was always held good night-quarters.

For the rest, Lockhard had his master's orders to bring some venison from the inn, and Caleb was to trust to his wits for the honour of his family. The Master, indeed, a second time held out his purse; but, as it was in sight of the strange servant, the butler thought himself obliged to decline what his fingers itched to clutch. "Couldna he hae slippit it gently into my hand?" said Caleb — "but his honour will never learn how to bear himsell in siccan cases."

Mysie, in the meantime, according to a uniform custom in remote places in Scotland, offered the strangers the produce of her little dairy, "while better meat was getting ready." And according to another custom, not yet wholly in desuetude, as the storm was now drifting off to leeward, the Master carried the Keeper to the top of his highest tower to admire a wide and waste extent of view, and to "weary for his dinner."

CHAPTER XII.

"Now dame," quoth he, "Je vous dis sans doute,
Had I nought of a capon but the liver,
And of your white bread nought but a shiver,
And after that a roasted pigge's head,
(But I ne wold for me no beast were dead,)
Then had I with you homely sufferaunce."

CHAUCER, *Sumner's Tale.*

IT was not without some secret misgivings that Caleb set out upon his exploratory expedition. In fact, it was attended with a treble difficulty. He dared not tell his master the offence which he had that morning given to Bucklaw (just for the honour of the family) — he dared not acknowledge he had been too hasty in refusing the purse — and, thirdly, he was somewhat apprehensive of unpleasant consequences upon his meeting Hayston under the impression of an affront, and probably by this time under the influence also of no small quantity of brandy.

Caleb, to do him justice, was as bold as any lion where the honour of the family of Ravenswood was concerned; but his was that considerate valour which does not delight in unnecessary risks. This, however, was a secondary consideration; the main point was to veil the indigence of the house-keeping at the castle, and to make good his vaunt of the cheer which his resources could procure, without Lockhard's assistance, and without supplies from his master. This was as prime a point of honour with

him, as with the generous elephant with whom we have already compared him, who, being over-tasked, broke his skull through the desperate exertions which he made to discharge his duty, when he perceived they were bringing up another to his assistance.

The village which they now approached had frequently afforded the distressed butler resources upon similar emergencies; but his relations with it had been of late much altered.

It was a little hamlet which straggled along the side of a creek formed by the discharge of a small brook into the sea, and was hidden from the castle, to which it had been in former times an appendage, by the intervention of the shoulder of a hill forming a projecting headland. It was called Wolf's-hope, (*i. e.* Wolf's Haven,) and the few inhabitants gained a precarious subsistence by manning two or three fishing-boats in the herring season, and smuggling gin and brandy during the winter months. They paid a kind of hereditary respect to the Lords of Ravenswood; but, in the difficulties of the family, most of the inhabitants of Wolf's-hope had contrived to get feu-rights[1] to their little possessions, their huts, kail-yards, and rights of commonty, so that they were emancipated from the chains of feudal dependence, and free from the various exactions with which, under every possible pretext, or without any pretext at all, the Scottish landlords of the period, themselves in great poverty, were wont to harass their still poorer tenants at will. They might be, on the whole, termed independent, a cir-

[1] That is, absolute rights of property for the payment of a sum annually, which is usually a trifle in such cases as are alluded to in the text.

cumstance peculiarly galling to Caleb, who had been wont to exercise over them the same sweeping authority in levying contributions which was exercised in former times in England, when "the royal purveyors, sallying forth from under the Gothic portcullis to purchase provisions with power and prerogative, instead of money, brought home the plunder of an hundred markets, and all that could be seized from a flying and hiding country, and deposited their spoil in an hundred caverns." [1]

Caleb loved the memory and resented the downfall of that authority, which mimicked, on a petty scale, the grand contributions exacted by the feudal sovereigns. And as he fondly flattered himself that the awful rule and right supremacy which assigned to the Barons of Ravenswood the first and most effective interest in all productions of nature within five miles of their castle, only slumbered, and was not departed for ever, he used every now and then to give the recollection of the inhabitants a little jog by some petty exaction. These were at first submitted to, with more or less readiness, by the inhabitants of the hamlet; for they had been so long used to consider the wants of the Baron and his family as having a title to be preferred to their own, that their actual independence did not convey to them an immediate sense of freedom. They resembled a man that has been long fettered, who, even at liberty, feels, in imagination, the grasp of the handcuffs still binding his wrists. But the exercise of freedom is quickly followed with the natural consciousness of its immunities, as the enlarged prisoner, by the free use of his limbs, soon

[1] Burke's Speech on Economical Reform.—Works, vol. iii. p. 250.

dispels the cramped feeling they had acquired when bound.

The inhabitants of Wolf's-hope began to grumble, to resist, and at length positively to refuse compliance with the exactions of Caleb Balderstone. It was in vain he reminded them, that when the eleventh Lord Ravenswood, called the Skipper, from his delight in naval matters, had encouraged the trade of their port by building the pier, (a bulwark of stones rudely piled together,) which protected the fishing-boats from the weather, it had been matter of understanding, that he was to have the first stone of butter after the calving of every cow within the barony, and the first egg, thence called the Monday's egg, laid by every hen on every Monday in the year.

The feuars heard and scratched their heads, coughed, sneezed, and being pressed for answer, rejoined with one voice, "They could not say;" — the universal refuge of a Scottish peasant, when pressed to admit a claim which his conscience owns, or perhaps his feelings, and his interest inclines him to deny.

Caleb, however, furnished the notables of Wolf's-hope with a note of the requisition of butter and eggs, which he claimed as arrears of the aforesaid subsidy, or kindly aid, payable as above mentioned; and having intimated that he would not be averse to compound the same for goods or money, if it was inconvenient to them to pay in kind, left them, as he hoped, to debate the mode of assessing themselves for that purpose. On the contrary, they met with a determined purpose of resisting the exaction, and were only undecided as to the mode of grounding their opposition, when the cooper, a very important person on a fishing station, and one

of the Conscript Fathers of the village, observed, "That their hens had caickled mony a day for the Lords of Ravenswood, and it was time they suld caickle for those that gave them roosts and barley." An unanimous grin intimated the assent of the assembly. "And," continued the orator, "if it's your wull, I'll just tak a step as far as Dunse, for Davie Dingwall the writer, that's come frae the North to settle amang us, and he'll pit this job to rights, I'se warrant him."

A day was accordingly fixed for holding a grand *palaver* at Wolf's-hope on the subject of Caleb's requisitions, and he was invited to attend at the hamlet for that purpose.

He went with open hands and empty stomach, trusting to fill the one on his master's account, and the other on his own score, at the expense of the feuars of Wolf's-hope. But, death to his hopes! as he entered the eastern end of the straggling village, the awful form of Davie Dingwall, a sly, dry, hard-fisted, shrewd country attorney, who had already acted against the family of Ravenswood, and was a principal agent of Sir William Ashton, trotted in at the western extremity, bestriding a leathern portmanteau stuffed with the feu-charters of the hamlet, and hoping he had not kept Mr. Balderstone waiting, "as he was instructed and fully empowered to pay or receive, compound or compensate, and, in fine, to *agé*[1] as accords, respecting all mutual and unsettled claims whatsoever, belonging or competent to the Honourable Edgar Ravenswood, commonly called the Master of Ravenswood" ——

"The *Right* Honourable Edgar *Lord Ravenswood*," said Caleb, with great emphasis; for, though con-

[1] *i. e.* To act as may be necessary and legal, a Scottish law phrase.

scious he had little chance of advantage in the conflict to ensue, he was resolved not to sacrifice one jot of honour.

"Lord Ravenswood, then," said the man of business; "we shall not quarrel with you about titles of courtesy — commonly called Lord Ravenswood, or Master of Ravenswood, heritable proprietor of the lands and barony of Wolf's Crag, on the one part, and to John Whitefish and others, feuars in the town of Wolf's-hope, within the barony aforesaid, on the other part."

Caleb was conscious, from sad experience, that he would wage a very different strife with this mercenary champion, than with the individual feuars themselves, upon whose old recollections, predilections, and habits of thinking, he might have wrought by an hundred indirect arguments, to which their deputy-representative was totally insensible. The issue of the debate proved the reality of his apprehensions. It was in vain he strained his eloquence and ingenuity, and collected into one mass all arguments arising from antique custom and hereditary respect, from the good deeds done by the Lord of Ravenswood to the community of Wolf's-hope in former days, and from what might be expected from them in future. The writer stuck to the contents of his feu-charters — he could not see it — 'twas not in the bond. And when Caleb, determined to try what a little spirit would do, deprecated the consequences of Lord Ravenswood's withdrawing his protection from the burgh, and even hinted at his using active measures of resentment, the man of law sneered in his face.

"His clients," he said, "had determined to do the best they could for their own town, and he

thought Lord Ravenswood, since he was a lord, might have enough to do to look after his own castle. As to any threats of stouthrief oppression, by rule of thumb, or *via facti*, as the law termed it, he would have Mr. Balderstone recollect, that new times were not as old times — that they lived on the south of the Forth, and far from the Highlands — that his clients thought they were able to protect themselves; but should they find themselves mistaken, they would apply to the government for the protection of a corporal and four red-coats, who," said Mr. Dingwall, with a grin, "would be perfectly able to secure them against Lord Ravenswood, and all that he or his followers could do by the strong hand."

If Caleb could have concentrated all the lightnings of aristocracy in his eye, to have struck dead this contemner of allegiance and privilege, he would have launched them at his head, without respect to the consequences. As it was, he was compelled to turn his course backward to the castle; and there he remained for full half a day invisible and inaccessible even to Mysie, sequestered in his own peculiar dungeon, where he sat burnishing a single pewter-plate, and whistling Maggy Lauder six hours without intermission.

The issue of this unfortunate requisition had shut against Caleb all resources which could be derived from Wolf's-hope and its purlieus, the El Dorado, or Peru, from which, in all former cases of exigence, he had been able to extract some assistance. He had, indeed, in a manner vowed that the deil should have him, if ever he put the print of his foot within its causeway again. He had hitherto kept his word; and, strange to tell, this secession had,

as he intended, in some degree, the effect of a punishment upon the refractory feuars. Mr. Balderstone had been a person in their eyes connected with a superior order of beings, whose presence used to grace their little festivities, whose advice they found useful on many occasions, and whose communications gave a sort of credit to their village. The place, they acknowledged, "didna look as it used to do, and should do, since Mr. Caleb keepit the castle sae closely — but doubtless, touching the eggs and butter, it was a most unreasonable demand, as Mr. Dingwall had justly made manifest."

Thus stood matters betwixt the parties, when the old butler, though it was gall and wormwood to him, found himself obliged either to acknowledge before a strange man of quality, and, what was much worse, before that stranger's servant, the total inability of Wolf's Crag to produce a dinner, or he must trust to the compassion of the feuars of Wolf's-hope. It was a dreadful degradation, but necessity was equally imperious and lawless. With these feelings he entered the street of the village.

Willing to shake himself from his companion as soon as possible, he directed Mr. Lockhard to Luckie Sma'trash's change-house, where a din, proceeding from the revels of Bucklaw, Craigengelt, and their party, sounded half-way down the street, while the red glare from the window overpowered the grey twilight which was now settling down, and glimmered against a parcel of old tubs, kegs, and barrels, piled up in the cooper's yard, on the other side of the way.

"If you, Mr. Lockhard," said the old butler to his companion, "will be pleased to step to the

change-house where that light comes from, and where, as I judge, they are now singing 'Cauld Kail in Aberdeen,' ye may do your master's errand about the venison, and I will do mine about Bucklaw's bed, as I return frae getting the rest of the vivers. — It's no that the venison is actually needfu'," he added, detaining his colleague by the button, "to make up the dinner; but, as a compliment to the hunters, ye ken — and, Mr. Lockhard — if they offer ye a drink o' yill, or a cup o' wine, or a glass o' brandy, ye'll be a wise man to take it, in case the thunner should hae soured ours at the castle, — whilk is ower muckle to be dreaded."

He then permitted Lockhard to depart; and with foot heavy as lead, and yet far lighter than his heart, stepped on through the unequal street of the straggling village, meditating on whom he ought to make his first attack. It was necessary he should find some one, with whom old acknowledged greatness should weigh more than recent independence, and to whom his application might appear an act of high dignity, relenting at once and soothing. But he could not recollect an inhabitant of a mind so constructed. "Our kail is like to be cauld eneugh too," he reflected, as the chorus of 'Cauld Kail' in Aberdeen again reached his ears. The minister — he had got his presentation from the late lord, but they had quarrelled about tiends; — the brewster's wife — she had trusted long — and the bill was aye scored up — and unless the dignity of the family should actually require it, it would be a sin to distress a widow woman. None was so able — but, on the other hand, none was likely to be less willing, to stand his friend upon the present occasion, than Gibbie Girder, the man of tubs and barrels

already mentioned, who had headed the insurrection in the matter of the egg and butter subsidy. — "But a' comes o' taking folk on the right side, I trow," quoth Caleb to himself; "and I had ance the ill hap to say he was but a Johnny Newcome in our town, and the carle bore the family an ill-will ever since. But he married a bonny young quean, Jean Lightbody, auld Lightbody's daughter, him that was in the steading of Loup-the-Dyke, — and auld Lightbody was married himsell to Marion, that was about my lady in the family forty years syne — I hae had mony a day's daffing wi' Jean's mither, and they say she bides on wi' them — the carle has Jacobuses and Georgiuses baith, an ane could get at them — and sure I am, it's doing him an honour him or his never deserved at our hand, the ungracious sumph; and if he loses by us a'thegither, he is e'en cheap o't, he can spare it brawly."

Shaking off irresolution, therefore, and turning at once upon his heel, Caleb walked hastily back to the cooper's house, lifted the latch without ceremony, and, in a moment, found himself behind the *hallan*, or partition, from which position he could, himself unseen, reconnoitre the interior of the *but*, or kitchen apartment, of the mansion.

Reverse of the sad menage at the Castle of Wolf's Crag, a bickering fire roared up the cooper's chimney. His wife on the one side, in her pearlings and pudding sleeves, put the last finishing touch to her holiday's apparel, while she contemplated a very handsome and good-humoured face in a broken mirror, raised upon the *bink* (the shelves on which the plates are disposed) for her special accommodation. Her mother, old Luckie Loup-the-Dyke, "a canty carline" as was within twenty miles of her,

according to the unanimous report of the *cummers*, or gossips, sat by the fire in the full glory of a grogram gown, lammer beads, and a clean cockernony, whiffing a snug pipe of tobacco, and superintending the affairs of the kitchen. For — sight more interesting to the anxious heart and craving entrails of the desponding Seneschal, than either buxom dame or canty cummer — there bubbled on the aforesaid bickering fire, a huge pot, or rather cauldron, steaming with beef and brewis; while before it revolved two spits, turned each by one of the cooper's apprentices, seated in the opposite corners of the chimney; the one loaded with a quarter of mutton, while the other was graced with a fat goose and a brace of wild ducks. The sight and scent of such a land of plenty almost wholly overcame the drooping spirits of Caleb. He turned, for a moment's space, to reconnoitre the *ben*, or parlour end of the house, and there saw a sight scarce less affecting to his feelings; — a large round table, covered for ten or twelve persons, *decored* (according to his own favourite term) with *napery* as white as snow; grand flagons of pewter, intermixed with one or two silver cups, containing, as was probable, something worthy the brilliancy of their outward appearance; clean trenchers, cutty spoons, knives and forks, sharp, burnished, and prompt for action, which lay all displayed as for an especial festival.

"The devil's in the pedling tub-coopering carle!" muttered Caleb, in all the envy of astonishment; "it's a shame to see the like o' them gusting their gabs at sic a rate. But if some o' that gude cheer does not find its way to Wolf's Crag this night, my name is not Caleb Balderstone."

So resolving, he entered the apartment, and, in all

courteous greeting, saluted both the mother and the daughter. Wolf's Crag was the court of the barony, Caleb prime minister at Wolf's Crag; and it has ever been remarked, that though the masculine subject who pays the taxes, sometimes growls at the courtiers by whom they are imposed, the said courtiers continue, nevertheless, welcome to the fair sex, to whom they furnish the newest small-talk and the earliest fashions. Both the dames were, therefore, at once about old Caleb's neck, setting up their throats together by way of welcome.

"Ay, sirs, Mr. Balderstone, and is this you? — A sight of you is gude for sair een — sit down — sit down — the gudeman will be blithe to see you — ye nar saw him sae cadgy in your life; but we are to christen our bit wean the night, as ye will hae heard, and doubtless ye will stay and see the ordinance. — We hae killed a wether, and ane o' our lads has been out wi' his gun at the moss — ye used to like wildfowl."

"Na — na — gudewife," said Caleb, "I just keekit in to wish ye joy, and I wad be glad to hae spoken wi' the gudeman, but ——" moving, as if to go away.

"The ne'er a fit ye's gang," said the elder dame, laughing and holding him fast, with a freedom which belonged to their old acquaintance; "wha kens what ill it may bring to the bairn, if ye owerlook it in that gate?"

"But I'm in a preceese hurry, gudewife," said the butler, suffering himself to be dragged to a seat without much resistance; "and as to eating" — for he observed the mistress of the dwelling bustling about to place a trencher for him — "as for eating — lack-a-day, we are just killed up yonder wi' eat-

ing frae morning to night—it's shamefu' epicurism; but that's what we hae gotten frae the English pock-puddings."

"Hout — never mind the English pock-puddings," said Luckie Lightbody; "try our puddings, Mr. Balderstone — there is black pudding and white-hass — try whilk ye like best."

"Baith gude — baith excellent — canna be better; but the very smell is eneugh for me that hae dined sae lately (the faithful wretch had fasted since day-break.) But I wadna affront your housewifeskep, gude-wife; and, with your permission, I'se e'en pit them in my napkin, and eat them to my supper at e'en, for I am wearied of Mysie's pastry and nonsense — ye ken landward dainties aye pleased me best, Marion — and landward lasses too — (looking at the cooper's wife) — Ne'er a bit but she looks far better than when she married Gilbert, and then she was the bonniest lass in our parochine and the neest till't — But gawsie cow, goodly calf."

The women smiled at the compliment each to herself, and they smiled again to each other as Caleb wrapt up the puddings in a towel which he had brought with him, as a dragoon carries his foraging bag to receive what may fall in his way.

"And what news at the castle?" quo' the gude-wife.

"News?—the bravest news ye ever heard — the Lord Keeper's up yonder wi' his fair daughter, just ready to fling her at my lord's head, if he winna tak her out o' his arms; and I'se warrant he'll stitch our auld lands of Ravenswood to her petticoat tail."

"Eh! sirs — ay! — and will he hae her? — and is she weel-favoured? — and what's the colour o' her hair? —and does she wear a habit or a railly?" were

the questions which the females showered upon the butler.

"Hout tout! — it wad tak a man a day to answer a' your questions, and I hae hardly a minute. Where's the gudeman?"

"Awa to fetch the minister," said Mrs. Girder, "precious Mr. Peter Bide-the-Bent, frae the Mosshead — the honest man has the rheumatism wi' lying in the hills in the persecution."

"Ay! — a whig and a mountain-man — nae less?" said Caleb, with a peevishness he could not suppress; "I hae seen the day, Luckie, when worthy Mr. Cuffcushion and the service-book (*l*) would hae served your turn, (to the elder dame,) or ony honest woman in like circumstances."

"And that's true too," said Mrs. Lightbody, "but what can a body do? —Jean maun baith sing her psalms and busk her cockernony the gate the gudeman likes, and nae ither gate; for he's maister and mair at hame, I can tell ye, Mr. Balderstone."

"Ay, ay, and does he guide the gear too?" said Caleb, to whose projects masculine rule boded little good.

"Ilka penny on't — but he'll dress her as dink as a daisy, as ye see — sae she has little reason to complain — where there's ane better aff there's ten waur."

"Aweel, gudewife," said Caleb, crest-fallen, but not beaten off, "that wasna the way ye guided your gudeman; but ilka land has its ain lauch. I maun be ganging — I just wanted to round in the gudeman's lug, that I heard them say up by yonder, that Peter Puncheon that was cooper to the Queen's stores at the Timmer Burse at Leith, is dead — sae I thought that maybe a word frae my lord to the Lord

Keeper might hae served Gilbert; but since he's frae hame" ——

"O but ye maun stay his hame-coming," said the dame, "I aye telled the gudeman ye meant weel to him; but he taks the tout at every bit lippening word."

"Aweel, I'll stay the last minute I can."

"And so," said the handsome young spouse of Mr. Girder, "ye think this Miss Ashton is weel-favoured? — troth, and sae should she, to set up for our young lord, with a face, and a hand, and a seat on his horse, that might become a king's son — d'ye ken that he aye glowers up at my window, Mr. Balderstone, when he chaunces to ride thro' the town, sae I hae a right to ken what like he is, as weel as ony body."

"I ken that brawly," said Caleb, "for I hae heard his lordship say the cooper's wife had the blackest ee in the barony; and I said, Weel may that be, my lord, for it was her mither's afore her, as I ken to my cost — Eh, Marion? Ha, ha, ha! — Ah! these were merry days!"

"Hout awa, auld carle," said the old dame, "to speak sic daffing to young folk. — But, Jean — fie, woman, dinna ye hear the bairn greet? I'se warrant it's that dreary weid [1] has come ower't again."

Up got mother and grandmother, and scoured away, jostling each other as they ran, into some remote corner of the tenement, where the young hero of the evening was deposited. When Caleb saw the coast fairly clear, he took an invigorating pinch of snuff, to sharpen and confirm his resolution.

Cauld be my cast, thought he, if either Bide-the-Bent or Girder taste that broche of wild-fowl this

[1] *Weid*, a feverish cold; a disorder incident to infants and to females, is so called.

evening; and then addressing the eldest turnspit, a boy of about eleven years old, and putting a penny into his hand, he said, "Here is twal pennies,[1] my man; carry that ower to Mrs. Sma'trash, and bid her fill my mill wi' suishing, and I'll turn the broche for ye in the meantime — and she will gie ye a gingebread snap for your pains."

No sooner was the elder boy departed on this mission, than Caleb, looking the remaining turnspit gravely and steadily in the face, removed from the fire the spit bearing the wild-fowl of which he had undertaken the charge, clapped his hat on his head, and fairly marched off with it. He stopped at the door of the change-house only to say, in a few brief words, that Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw was not to expect a bed that evening in the castle.

If this message was too briefly delivered by Caleb, it became absolute rudeness when conveyed through the medium of a suburb landlady; and Bucklaw was, as a more calm and temperate man might have been, highly incensed. Captain Craigengelt proposed, with the unanimous applause of all present, that they should course the old fox (meaning Caleb) ere he got to cover, and toss him in a blanket. But Lockhard intimated to his master's servants, and those of Lord Bittlebrains, in a tone of authority, that the slightest impertinence to the Master of Ravenswood's domestic, would give Sir William Ashton the highest offence. And having so said, in a manner sufficient to prevent any aggression on their part, he left the public-house, taking along with him two servants loaded with such provisions as he had been able to procure, and overtook Caleb just when he had cleared the village.

[1] Monetæ Scoticæ, scilicet.

CHAPTER XIII.

> Should I take aught of you? — 'tis true I begged now;
> And what is worse than that, I stole a kindness;
> And, what is worst of all, I lost my way in't.
>
> *Wit without Money.*

THE face of the little boy, sole witness of Caleb's infringement upon the laws at once of property and hospitality, would have made a good picture. He sat motionless, as if he had witnessed some of the spectral appearances which he had heard told of in a winter's evening; and as he forgot his own duty, and allowed his spit to stand still, he added to the misfortunes of the evening, by suffering the mutton to burn as black as a coal. He was first recalled from his trance of astonishment by a hearty cuff, administered by Dame Lightbody, who (in whatever other respects she might conform to her name) was a woman strong of person, and expert in the use of her hands, as some say her deceased husband had known to his cost.

"What gar'd ye let the roast burn, ye ill-cleckit gude-for-nought?"

"I dinna ken," said the boy.

"And where's that ill-deedy gett, Giles?"

"I dinna ken," blubbered the astonished declarant.

"And where's Mr. Balderstone? — and abune a', and in the name of council and kirk-session, that I suld say sae, where's the broche wi' the wild-fowl?"

As Mrs. Girder here entered, and joined her mother's exclamations, screaming into one ear while the

old lady deafened the other, they succeeded in so utterly confounding the unhappy urchin, that he could not for some time tell his story at all, and it was only when the elder boy returned, that the truth began to dawn on their minds.

"Weel, sirs!" said Mrs. Lightbody, "wha wad hae thought o' Caleb Balderstone playing an auld acquaintance sic a pliskie!"

"O, weary on him!" said the spouse of Mr. Girder; "and what am I to say to the gudeman?—he'll brain me, if there wasna anither woman in a' Wolf's-hope."

"Hout tout, silly quean," said the mother; "na, na—it's come to muckle, but it's no come to that neither; for an he brain you he maun brain me, and I have gar'd his betters stand back—hands aff is fair play—we maunna heed a bit flyting."

The tramp of horses now announced the arrival of the cooper, with the minister. They had no sooner dismounted than they made for the kitchen fire, for the evening was cool after the thunder storm, and the woods wet and dirty. The young gudewife, strong in the charms of her Sunday gown and biggonets, threw herself in the way of receiving the first attack, while her mother, like the veteran division of the Roman legion, remained in the rear, ready to support her in case of necessity. Both hoped to protract the discovery of what had happened—the mother, by interposing her bustling person betwixt Mr. Girder and the fire, and the daughter, by the extreme cordiality with which she received the minister and her husband, and the anxious fears which she expressed lest they should have "gotten cauld."

"Cauld?" quoth the husband surlily—for he was

not of that class of lords and masters whose wives are viceroys over them — "we'll be cauld eneugh, I think, if ye dinna let us in to the fire."

And so saying, he burst his way through both lines of defence; and, as he had a careful eye over his property of every kind, he perceived at one glance the absence of the spit with its savoury burden. "What the deil, woman" ——

"Fie for shame!" exclaimed both the women; "and before Mr. Bide-the-Bent!"

"I stand reproved," said the cooper; "but" ——

"The taking in our mouths the name of the great enemy of our souls," said Mr. Bide-the-Bent ——

"I stand reproved," said the cooper.

"Is an exposing ourselves to his temptations," continued the reverend monitor, "and an inviting, or, in some sort, a compelling, of him to lay aside his other trafficking with unhappy persons, and wait upon those in whose speech his name is frequent."

"Weel, weel, Mr. Bide-the-Bent, can a man do mair than stand reproved?" said the cooper; "but just let me ask the women what for they hae dished the wild-fowl before we came."

"They arena dished, Gilbert," said his wife; "but — but an accident" ——

"What accident?" said Girder, with flashing eyes — "Nae ill come ower them, I trust? Uh?"

His wife, who stood much in awe of him, durst not reply, but her mother bustled up to her support, with arms disposed as if they were about to be a-kimbo at the next reply. — "I gied them to an acquaintance of mine, Gibbie Girder; and what about it now?"

Her excess of assurance struck Girder mute for

an instant. — "And *ye* gied the wild-fowl, the best end of our christening dinner, to a friend of yours, ye auld rudas! And what might *his* name be, I pray ye?"

"Just worthy Mr. Caleb Balderstone, frae Wolf's Crag," answered Marion, prompt and prepared for battle.

Girder's wrath foamed over all restraint. If there was a circumstance which could have added to the resentment he felt, it was, that this extravagant donation had been made in favour of our friend Caleb, towards whom, for reasons to which the reader is no stranger, he nourished a decided resentment. He raised his riding-wand against the elder matron, but she stood firm, collected in herself, and undauntedly brandished the iron ladle with which she had just been *flambing* (*Anglicè*, basting) the roast of mutton. Her weapon was certainly the better, and her arm not the weakest of the two; so that Gilbert thought it safest to turn short off upon his wife, who had by this time hatched a sort of hysterical whine, which greatly moved the minister, who was in fact as simple and kind-hearted a creature as ever breathed. — "And you, ye thowless jadd, to sit still and see my substance disponed upon to an idle, drunken, reprobate, worm-eaten, serving man, just because he kittles the lugs o' a silly auld wife wi' useless clavers, and every twa words a lee? — I'll gar you as gude" ——

Here the minister interposed, both by voice and action, while Dame Lightbody threw herself in front of her daughter, and flourished her ladle.

"Am I no to chastise my ain wife?" exclaimed the cooper, very indignantly.

"Ye may chastise your ain wife if ye like,"

answered Dame Lightbody; "but ye shall never lay finger on my daughter, and that ye may found upon."

"For shame, Mr. Girder!" said the clergyman; "this is what I little expected to have seen of you, that you suld give rein to your sinful passions against your nearest and your dearest; and this night too, when ye are called to the most solemn duty of a Christian parent — and a' for what? for a redundancy of creature-comforts, as worthless as they are unneedful."

"Worthless!" exclaimed the cooper; "a better guse never walkit on stubble; twa finer dentier wild-ducks never wat a feather."

"Be it sae, neighbour," rejoined the minister; "but see what superfluities are yet revolving before your fire. I have seen the day when ten of the bannocks which stand upon that board would have been an acceptable dainty to as many men, that were starving on hills and bogs, and in caves of the earth, for the Gospel's sake."

"And that's what vexes me maist of a'," said the cooper, anxious to get some one to sympathize with his not altogether causeless anger; "an the quean had gien it to ony suffering sant, or to ony body ava but that reaving, lying, oppressing tory villain, that rade in the wicked troop of militia when it was commanded out against the sants at Bothwell Brigg by the auld tyrant Allan Ravenswood, that is gane to his place, I wad the less hae minded it. But to gie the principal part o' the feast to the like o' him!" ——

"Aweel, Gilbert," said the minister, "and dinna ye see a high judgment in this? — The seed of the righteous are not seen begging their bread — think

of the son of a powerful oppressor being brought to the pass of supporting his household from your fulness."

"And, besides," said the wife, "it wasna for Lord Ravenswood neither, an he wad hear but a body speak — it was to help to entertain the Lord Keeper, as they ca' him, that's up yonder at Wolf's Crag."

"Sir William Ashton at Wolf's Crag!" ejaculated the astonished man of hoops and staves.

"And hand and glove wi' Lord Ravenswood," added Dame Lightbody.

"Doited idiot! — that auld clavering sneck-drawer wad gar ye trow the moon is made of green cheese. The Lord Keeper and Ravenswood! they are cat and dog, hare and hound."

"I tell ye they are man and wife, and gree better than some others that are sae," retorted the mother-in-law; "forby, Peter Puncheon, that's cooper to the Queen's stores, is dead, and the place is to fill, and" ——

"Od guide us, wull ye haud your skirling tongues!" said Girder, — for we are to remark, that this explanation was given like a catch for two voices, the younger dame, much encouraged by the turn of the debate, taking up, and repeating in a higher tone, the words as fast as they were uttered by her mother.

"The gudewife says naething but what's true, maister," said Girder's foreman, who had come in during the fray. "I saw the Lord Keeper's servants drinking and driving ower at Luckie Sma'trash's, ower by yonder."

"And is their maister up at Wolf's Crag?" said Girder.

"Ay, troth is he," replied his man of confidence.

"And friends wi' Ravenswood?"

"It's like sae," answered the foreman, "since he is putting up[1] wi' him."

"And Peter Puncheon's dead?"

"Ay, ay — Puncheon has leaked out at last, the auld carle," said the foreman; "mony a dribble o' brandy has gaen through him in his day. — But as for the broche and the wild-fowl, the saddle's no aff your mare yet, maister, and I could follow and bring it back, for Mr. Balderstone's no far aff the town yet."

"Do sae, Will — and come here — I'll tell ye what to do when ye owertake him."

He relieved the females of his presence, and gave Will his private instructions.

"A bonny-like thing," said the mother-in-law, as the cooper re-entered the apartment, "to send the innocent lad after an armed man, when ye ken Mr. Balderstone aye wears a rapier, and whiles a dirk into the bargain."

"I trust," said the minister, "ye have reflected weel on what ye have done, lest you should minister cause of strife, of which it is my duty to say, he who affordeth matter, albeit he himself striketh not, is in no manner guiltless."

"Never fash your beard, Mr. Bide-the-Bent," replied Girder; "ane canna get their breath out here between wives and ministers — I ken best how to turn my ain cake. — Jean, serve up the dinner, and nae mair about it."

Nor did he again allude to the deficiency in the course of the evening.

Meantime, the foreman, mounted on his master's

[1] Taking up his abode.

steed, and charged with his special orders, pricked swiftly forth in pursuit of the marauder Caleb. That personage, it may be imagined, did not linger by the way. He intermitted even his dearly-beloved chatter, for the purpose of making more haste — only assuring Mr. Lockhard that he had made the purveyor's wife give the wild-fowl a few turns before the fire, in case that Mysie, who had been so much alarmed by the thunder, should not have her kitchen-grate in full splendour. Meanwhile, alleging the necessity of being at Wolf's Crag as soon as possible, he pushed on so fast that his companions could scarce keep up with him. He began already to think he was safe from pursuit, having gained the summit of the swelling eminence which divides Wolf's Crag from the village, when he heard the distant tread of a horse, and a voice which shouted at intervals, "Mr. Caleb — Mr. Balderstone — Mr. Caleb Balderstone — hollo — bide a wee!"

Caleb, it may be well believed, was in no hurry to acknowledge the summons. First, he would not hear it, and faced his companions down, that it was the echo of the wind; then he said it was not worth stopping for; and, at length, halting reluctantly, as the figure of the horseman appeared through the shades of the evening, he bent up his whole soul to the task of defending his prey, threw himself into an attitude of dignity, advanced the spit, which in his grasp might with its burden seem both spear and shield, and firmly resolved to die rather than surrender it.

What was his astonishment, when the cooper's foreman, riding up and addressing him with respect, told him, "his master was very sorry he was ab-

sent when he came to his dwelling, and grieved that he could not tarry the christening dinner; and that he had taen the freedom to send a sma' rundlet of sack, and ane anker of brandy, as he understood there were guests at the castle, and that they were short of preparation."

I have heard somewhere a story of an elderly gentleman, who was pursued by a bear that had gotten loose from its muzzle, until completely exhausted. In a fit of desperation, he faced round upon Bruin and lifted his cane; at the sight of which the instinct of discipline prevailed, and the animal, instead of tearing him to pieces, rose up upon his hind-legs, and instantly began to shuffle a saraband. Not less than the joyful surprise of the senior, who had supposed himself in the extremity of peril from which he was thus unexpectedly relieved, was that of our excellent friend Caleb, when he found the pursuer intended to add to his prize, instead of bereaving him of it. He recovered his latitude, however, instantly, so soon as the foreman, stooping from his nag, where he sate perched betwixt the two barrels, whispered in his ear, — "If ony thing about Peter Puncheon's place could be airted their way, John Girder wad mak it better to the Master of Ravenswood than a pair of new gloves; and that he wad be blithe to speak wi' Maister Balderstone on that head, and he wad find him as pliant as a hoop-willow in a' that he could wish of him."

Caleb heard all this without rendering any answer, except that of all great men from Louis XIV. downwards, namely, "we will see about it;" and then added aloud, for the edification of Mr. Lockhard, — "Your master has acted with becoming

civility and attention in forwarding the liquors, and I will not fail to represent it properly to my Lord Ravenswood. And, my lad," he said, "you may ride on to the castle, and if none of the servants are returned, whilk is to be dreaded, as they make day and night of it when they are out of sight, ye may put them into the porter's lodge, whilk is on the right hand of the great entry — the porter has got leave to go to see his friends, sae ye will meet no ane to steer ye."

The foreman, having received his orders, rode on; and having deposited the casks in the deserted and ruinous porter's lodge, he returned unquestioned by any one. Having thus executed his master's commission, and doffed his bonnet to Caleb and his company as he repassed them in his way to the village, he returned to have his share of the christening festivity.[1]

[1] Note I.— Raid of Caleb Balderstone.

CHAPTER XIV.

As, to the Autumn breeze's bugle sound,
Various and vague the dry leaves dance their round;
Or, from the garner-door, on ether borne,
The chaff flies devious from the winnow'd corn;
So vague, so devious, at the breath of heaven,
From their fix'd aim are mortal counsels driv'n.

Anonymous.

We left Caleb Balderstone in the extremity of triumph at the success of his various achievements for the honour of the house of Ravenswood. When he had mustered and marshalled his dishes of divers kinds, a more royal provision had not been seen in Wolf's Crag, since the funeral feast of its deceased lord. Great was the glory of the serving-man, as he *decored* the old oaken table with a clean cloth, and arranged upon it carbonated venison and roasted wild-fowl, with a glance, every now and then, as if to upbraid the incredulity of his master and his guests; and with many a story, more or less true, was Lockhard that evening regaled concerning the ancient grandeur of Wolf's Crag, and the sway of its Barons over the country in their neighbourhood.

"A vassal scarce held a calf or a lamb his ain, till he had first asked if the Lord of Ravenswood was pleased to accept it; and they were obliged to ask the lord's consent before they married in these days, and mony a merry tale they tell about that

right as weel as others. And although," said Caleb, "these times are not like the gude auld times, when authority had its right, yet true it is, Mr. Lockhard, and you yoursell may partly have remarked, that we of the House of Ravenswood do our endeavour in keeping up, by all just and lawful exertion of our baronial authority, that due and fitting connexion betwixt superior and vassal, whilk is in some danger of falling into desuetude, owing to the general license and misrule of these present unhappy times."

"Umph!" said Mr. Lockhard; "and if I may enquire, Mr. Balderstone, pray do you find your people at the village yonder amenable? for I must needs say, that at Ravenswood Castle, now pertaining to my master, the Lord Keeper, ye have not left behind ye the most compliant set of tenantry."

"Ah! but Mr. Lockhard," replied Caleb, "ye must consider there has been a change of hands, and the auld lord might expect twa turns frae them, when the new comer canna get ane. A dour and fractious set they were, thae tenants of Ravenswood, and ill to live wi' when they dinna ken their master — and if your master put them mad ance, the whole country will not put them down."

"Troth," said Mr. Lockhard, "an such be the case, I think the wisest thing for us a' wad be to hammer up a match between your young lord and our winsome young leddy up by there; and Sir William might just stitch your auld barony to her gown-sleeve, and he wad sune cuitle[1] another out o' somebody else, sic a lang head as he has."

Caleb shook his head. — "I wish," he said, "I wish that may answer, Mr. Lockhard. There are

[1] *Cuitle* may answer to the elegant modern phrase *diddle*.

auld prophecies about this house I wad like ill to see fulfilled wi' my auld een, that has seen evil eneugh already."

"Pshaw! never mind freits," said his brother butler; "if the young folk liked ane anither, they wad make a winsome couple. But, to say truth, there is a leddy sits in our hall-neuk, maun have her hand in that as weel as in every other job. But there's no harm in drinking to their healths, and I will fill Mrs. Mysie a cup of Mr. Girder's canary."

While they thus enjoyed themselves in the kitchen, the company in the hall were not less pleasantly engaged. So soon as Ravenswood had determined upon giving the Lord Keeper such hospitality as he had to offer, he deemed it incumbent on him to assume the open and courteous brow of a well-pleased host. It has been often remarked, that when a man commences by acting a character, he frequently ends by adopting it in good earnest. In the course of an hour or two, Ravenswood, to his own surprise, found himself in the situation of one who frankly does his best to entertain welcome and honoured guests. How much of this change in his disposition was to be ascribed to the beauty and simplicity of Miss Ashton, to the readiness with which she accommodated herself to the inconveniences of her situation — how much to the smooth and plausible conversation of the Lord Keeper, remarkably gifted with those words which win the ear, must be left to the reader's ingenuity to conjecture. But Ravenswood was insensible to neither.

The Lord Keeper was a veteran statesman, well acquainted with courts and cabinets, and intimate with all the various turns of public affairs during

the last eventful years of the seventeenth century. He could talk, from his own knowledge, of men and events, in a way which failed not to win attention, and had the peculiar art, while he never said a word which committed himself, at the same time to persuade the hearer that he was speaking without the least shadow of scrupulous caution or reserve. Ravenswood, in spite of his prejudices and real grounds of resentment, felt himself at once amused and instructed in listening to him, while the statesman, whose inward feelings had at first so much impeded his efforts to make himself known, had now regained all the ease and fluency of a silver-tongued lawyer of the very highest order.

His daughter did not speak much, but she smiled; and what she did say argued a submissive gentleness, and a desire to give pleasure, which, to a proud man like Ravenswood, was more fascinating than the most brilliant wit. Above all, he could not but observe, that, whether from gratitude, or from some other motive, he himself, in his deserted and unprovided hall, was as much the object of respectful attention to his guests, as he would have been when surrounded by all the appliances and means of hospitality proper to his high birth. All deficiencies passed unobserved, or, if they did not escape notice, it was to praise the substitutes which Caleb had contrived to supply the want of the usual accommodations. Where a smile was unavoidable, it was a very good-humoured one, and often coupled with some well-turned compliment, to show how much the guests esteemed the merits of their noble host, how little they thought of the inconveniences with which they were surrounded. I am not sure whether the pride of being found to outbalance, in

virtue of his own personal merit, all the disadvantages of fortune, did not make as favourable an impression upon the haughty heart of the Master of Ravenswood, as the conversation of the father and the beauty of Lucy Ashton.

The hour of repose arrived. The Keeper and his daughter retired to their apartments, which were "decored" more properly than could have been anticipated. In making the necessary arrangements, Mysie had indeed enjoyed the assistance of a gossip who had arrived from the village upon an exploratory expedition, but had been arrested by Caleb, and impressed into the domestic drudgery of the evening. So that, instead of returning home to describe the dress and person of the grand young lady, she found herself compelled to be active in the domestic economy of Wolf's Crag.

According to the custom of the time, the Master of Ravenswood attended the Lord Keeper to his apartment, followed by Caleb, who placed on the table, with all the ceremonials due to torches of wax, two rudely-framed tallow-candles, such as in those days were only used by the peasantry, hooped in paltry clasps of wire, which served for candlesticks. He then disappeared, and presently entered with two earthen flagons, (the china, he said, had been little used since my lady's time,) one filled with canary wine, the other with brandy.[1] The canary sack, unheeding all probabilities of detection, he declared had been twenty years in the cellars of Wolf's Crag, "though it was not for him to speak before their honours; the brandy — it was weel-kend liquor, as mild as mead, and as strong as Sampson— it had been in the house ever since

[1] Note II. — Ancient Hospitality.

the memorable revel, in which auld Micklestob had been slain at the head of the stair by Jamie of Jenklebrae, on account of the honour of the worshipful Lady Muirend, wha was in some sort an ally of the family; natheless" ——

"But to cut that matter short, Mr. Caleb," said the Keeper, "perhaps you will favour me with a ewer of water."

"God forbid your lordship should drink water in this family," replied Caleb, "to the disgrace of so honourable an house!"

"Nevertheless, if his lordship have a fancy," said the Master, smiling, "I think you might indulge him; for, if I mistake not, there has been water drank here at no distant date, and with good relish too."

"To be sure, if his lordship has a fancy," said Caleb; and re-entering with a jug of pure element — "He will scarce find such water onywhere as is drawn frae the well at Wolf's Crag — nevertheless" ——

"Nevertheless, we must leave the Lord Keeper to his repose in this poor chamber of ours," said the Master of Ravenswood, interrupting his talkative domestic, who immediately turning to the doorway, with a profound reverence, prepared to usher his master from the secret chamber.

But the Lord Keeper prevented his host's departure. — "I have but one word to say to the Master of Ravenswood, Mr. Caleb, and I fancy he will excuse your waiting."

With a second reverence, lower than the former, Caleb withdrew — and his master stood motionless, expecting, with considerable embarrassment, what was to close the events of a day fraught with unexpected incidents.

"Master of Ravenswood," said Sir William Ashton, with some embarrassment, "I hope you understand the Christian law too well to suffer the sun to set upon your anger."

The Master blushed and replied, "He had no occasion that evening to exercise the duty enjoined upon him by his Christian faith."

"I should have thought otherwise," said his guest, "considering the various subjects of dispute and litigation which have unhappily occurred more frequently than was desirable or necessary betwixt the late honourable lord, your father, and myself."

"I could wish, my lord," said Ravenswood, agitated by suppressed emotion, "that reference to these circumstances should be made anywhere rather than under my father's roof."

"I should have felt the delicacy of this appeal at another time," said Sir William Ashton, "but now I must proceed with what I mean to say. — I have suffered too much in my own mind, from the false delicacy which prevented my soliciting with earnestness, what indeed I frequently requested, a personal communing with your father — much distress of mind to him and to me might have been prevented."

"It is true," said Ravenswood, after a moment's reflection; "I have heard my father say your lordship had proposed a personal interview."

"Proposed, my dear Master? I did indeed propose it, but I ought to have begged, entreated, beseeched it. I ought to have torn away the veil which interested persons had stretched betwixt us, and shown myself as I was, willing to sacrifice a considerable part even of my legal rights, in order to conciliate feelings so natural as his must be allowed to have been. Let me say for myself, my

young friend, for so I will call you, that had your father and I spent the same time together which my good fortune has allowed me to-day to pass in your company, it is possible the land might yet have enjoyed one of the most respectable of its ancient nobility, and I should have been spared the pain of parting in enmity from a person whose general character I so much admired and honoured."

He put his handkerchief to his eyes. Ravenswood also was moved, but awaited in silence the progress of this extraordinary communication.

"It is necessary," continued the Lord Keeper, "and proper that you should understand, that there have been many points betwixt us, in which, although I judged it proper that there should be an exact ascertainment of my legal rights by the decree of a court of justice, yet it was never my intention to press them beyond the verge of equity."

"My lord," said the Master of Ravenswood, "it is unnecessary to pursue this topic farther. What the law will give you, or has given you, you enjoy — or you shall enjoy; neither my father, nor I myself, would have received any thing on the footing of favour."

"Favour? — no — you misunderstand me," resumed the Keeper; "or rather you are no lawyer. A right may be good in law, and ascertained to be so, which yet a man of honour may not in every case care to avail himself of."

"I am sorry for it, my lord," said the Master.

"Nay, nay," retorted his guest, "you speak like a young counsellor; your spirit goes before your wit. There are many things still open for decision betwixt us. Can you blame me, an old man desirous of peace, and in the castle of a young nobleman who

has saved my daughter's life and my own, that I am desirous, anxiously desirous, that these should be settled on the most liberal principles?"

The old man kept fast hold of the Master's passive hand as he spoke, and made it impossible for him, be his predetermination what it would, to return any other than an acquiescent reply; and wishing his guest good-night, he postponed farther conference until the next morning.

Ravenswood hurried into the hall, where he was to spend the night, and for a time traversed its pavement with a disordered and rapid pace. His mortal foe was under his roof, yet his sentiments towards him were neither those of a feudal enemy nor of a true Christian. He felt as if he could neither forgive him in the one character, nor follow forth his vengeance in the other, but that he was making a base and dishonourable composition betwixt his resentment against the father and his affection for his daughter. He cursed himself, as he hurried to and fro in the pale moonlight, and more ruddy gleams of the expiring wood-fire. He threw open and shut the latticed windows with violence, as if alike impatient of the admission and exclusion of free air. At length, however, the torrent of passion foamed off its madness, and he flung himself into the chair, which he proposed as his place of repose for the night.

If, in reality, — such were the calmer thoughts that followed the first tempest of his passion, — if, in reality, this man desires no more than the law allows him — if he is willing to adjust even his acknowledged rights upon an equitable footing, what could be my father's cause of complaint? — what is mine? — Those from whom we won our ancient

possessions fell under the sword of my ancestors, and left lands and livings to the conquerors; we sink under the force of the law, now too powerful for the Scottish chivalry. Let us parley with the victors of the day, as if we had been besieged in our fortress, and without hope of relief. This man may be other than I have thought him; and his daughter — but I have resolved not to think of her.

He wrapt his cloak around him, fell asleep, and dreamed of Lucy Ashton till daylight gleamed through the lattices.

CHAPTER XV.

We worldly men, when we see friends and kinsmen
Past hope sunk in their fortunes, lend no hand
To lift them up, but rather set our feet
Upon their heads to press them to the bottom,
As I must yield with you I practised it;
But now I see you in a way to rise,
I can and will assist you.

New Way to Pay Old Debts.

THE Lord Keeper carried with him to a couch harder than he was accustomed to stretch himself upon, the same ambitious thoughts and political perplexities, which drive sleep from the softest down that ever spread a bed of state. He had sailed long enough amid the contending tides and currents of the time to be sensible of their peril, and of the necessity of trimming his vessel to the prevailing wind, if he would have her escape shipwreck in the storm. The nature of his talents, and the timorousness of disposition connected with them, had made him assume the pliability of the versatile old Earl of Northampton, who explained the art by which he kept his ground during all the changes of state, from the reign of Henry VIII. to that of Elizabeth, by the frank avowal, that he was born of the willow, not of the oak. It had accordingly been Sir William Ashton's policy, on all occasions, to watch the changes in the political horizon, and, ere yet the conflict was decided, to negotiate some interest for himself with the party most likely to prove victorious. His time-serving disposition was well known, and excited the

contempt of the more daring leaders of both factions in the state. But his talents were of a useful and practical kind, and his legal knowledge held in high estimation; and they so far counterbalanced other deficiencies, that those in power were glad to use and to reward, though without absolutely trusting or greatly respecting him.

The Marquis of A—— had used his utmost influence to effect a change in the Scottish cabinet, and his schemes had been of late so well laid and so ably supported, that there appeared a very great chance of his proving ultimately successful. He did not, however, feel so strong or so confident as to neglect any means of drawing recruits to his standard. The acquisition of the Lord Keeper was deemed of some importance, and a friend, perfectly acquainted with his circumstances and character, became responsible for his political conversion.

When this gentleman arrived at Ravenswood Castle upon a visit, the real purpose of which was disguised under general courtesy, he found the prevailing fear, which at present beset the Lord Keeper, was that of danger to his own person from the Master of Ravenswood. The language which the blind sibyl, old Alice, had used; the sudden appearance of the Master, armed, and within his precincts, immediately after he had been warned against danger from him; the cold and haughty return received in exchange for the acknowledgments with which he loaded him for his timely protection, had all made a strong impression on his imagination.

So soon as the Marquis's political agent found how the wind sate, he began to insinuate fears and doubts of another kind, scarce less calculated to affect the Lord Keeper. He enquired with seeming

interest, whether the proceedings in Sir William's complicated litigation with the Ravenswood family was out of court, and settled without the possibility of appeal? The Lord Keeper answered in the affirmative; but his interrogator was too well informed to be imposed upon. He pointed out to him, by unanswerable arguments, that some of the most important points which had been decided in his favour against the house of Ravenswood, were liable, under the Treaty of Union, to be reviewed by the British House of Peers, a court of equity of which the Lord Keeper felt an instinctive dread. This course came instead of an appeal to the old Scottish Parliament, or, as it was technically termed, "a protestation for remeid in law."

The Lord Keeper, after he had for some time disputed the legality of such a proceeding, was compelled, at length, to comfort himself with the improbability of the young Master of Ravenswood's finding friends in parliament, capable of stirring in so weighty an affair.

"Do not comfort yourself with that false hope," said his wily friend; "it is possible that, in the next session of Parliament, young Ravenswood may find more friends and favour even than your lordship."

"That would be a sight worth seeing," said the Keeper, scornfully.

"And yet," said his friend, "such things have been seen ere now, and in our own time. There are many at the head of affairs even now, that a few years ago were under hiding for their lives; and many a man now dines on plate of silver, that was fain to eat his crowdy without a bicker; and many a high head has been brought full low among

us in as short a space. Scott of Scotstarvet's (*m*) 'Staggering State of Scots Statesmen', of which curious memoir you showed me a manuscript, has been outstaggered in our time."

The Lord Keeper answered with a deep sigh, "that these mutations were no new sights in Scotland, and had been witnessed long before the time of the satirical author he had quoted. It was many a long year," he said, "since Fordun had quoted as an ancient proverb, '*Neque dives, neque fortis, sed nec sapiens Scotus, prædominante invidia, diu durabit in terra.*'"

"And be assured, my esteemed friend," was the answer, "that even your long services to the state, or deep legal knowledge, will not save you, or render your estate stable, if the Marquis of A—— comes in with a party in the British Parliament. You know that the deceased Lord Ravenswood was his near ally, his lady being fifth in descent from the Knight of Tillibardine; and I am well assured that he will take young Ravenswood by the hand, and be his very good lord and kinsman. Why should he not? — The Master is an active and stirring young fellow, able to help himself with tongue and hands; and it is such as he that finds friends among their kindred, and not those unarmed and unable Mephibosheths, that are sure to be a burden to every one that takes them up. And so, if these Ravenswood cases be called over the coals in the House of Peers, you will find that the Marquis will have a crow to pluck with you."

"That would be an evil requital," said the Lord Keeper, "for my long services to the state, and the ancient respect in which I have held his lordship's honourable family and person."

"Ay, but," rejoined the agent of the Marquis, "it is in vain to look back on past service and auld respect, my lord — it will be present service and immediate proofs of regard, which, in these sliddery times, will be expected by a man like the Marquis."

The Lord Keeper now saw the full drift of his friend's argument, but he was too cautious to return any positive answer.

"He knew not," he said, "the service which the Lord Marquis could expect from one of his limited abilities, that had not always stood at his command, still saving and reserving his duty to his king and country."

Having thus said nothing, while he seemed to say every thing, for the exception was calculated to cover whatever he might afterwards think proper to bring under it, Sir William Ashton changed the conversation, nor did he again permit the same topic to be introduced. His guest departed, without having brought the wily old statesman the length of committing himself, or of pledging himself to any future line of conduct, but with the certainty that he had alarmed his fears in a most sensible point, and laid a foundation for future and farther treaty.

When he rendered an account of his negotiation to the Marquis, they both agreed that the Keeper ought not to be permitted to relapse into security, and that he should be plied with new subjects of alarm, especially during the absence of his lady. They were well aware that her proud, vindictive, and predominating spirit, would be likely to supply him with the courage in which he was deficient — that she was immovably attached to the party now in power, with whom she maintained a close cor-

respondence and alliance, and that she hated, without fearing, the Ravenswood family, (whose more ancient dignity threw discredit on the newly acquired grandeur of her husband,) to such a degree, that she would have periled the interest of her own house, to have the prospect of altogether crushing that of her enemy.

But Lady Ashton was now absent. The business which had long detained her in Edinburgh, had afterwards induced her to travel to London, not without the hope that she might contribute her share to disconcert the intrigues of the Marquis at court; for she stood high in favour with the celebrated Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, to whom, in point of character, she bore considerable resemblance. It was necessary to press her husband hard before her return; and, as a preparatory step, the Marquis wrote to the Master of Ravenswood the letter which we rehearsed in a former chapter. It was cautiously worded, so as to leave it in the power of the writer hereafter to take as deep, or as slight an interest in the fortunes of his kinsman, as the progress of his own schemes might require. But however unwilling, as a statesman, the Marquis might be to commit himself, or assume the character of a patron, while he had nothing to give away, it must be said to his honour, that he felt a strong inclination effectually to befriend the Master of Ravenswood, as well as to use his name as a means of alarming the terrors of the Lord Keeper.

As the messenger who carried this letter was to pass near the house of the Lord Keeper, he had it in direction, that in the village adjoining to the park-gate of the castle, his horse should lose a shoe, and that, while it was replaced by the smith of the

place, he should express the utmost regret for the necessary loss of time, and in the vehemence of his impatience, give it to be understood, that he was bearing a message from the Marquis of A—— to the Master of Ravenswood, upon a matter of life and death.

This news, with exaggerations, was speedily carried from various quarters to the ears of the Lord Keeper, and each reporter dwelt upon the extreme impatience of the courier, and the surprising short time in which he had executed his journey. The anxious statesman heard in silence; but in private Lockhard received orders to watch the courier on his return, to waylay him in the village, to ply him with liquor if possible, and to use all means, fair or foul, to learn the contents of the letter of which he was the bearer. But as this plot had been foreseen, the messenger returned by a different and distant road, and thus escaped the snare that was laid for him.

After he had been in vain expected for some time, Mr. Dingwall had orders to make especial enquiry among his clients of Wolf's-hope, whether such a domestic belonging to the Marquis of A—— had actually arrived at the neighbouring castle. This was easily ascertained; for Caleb had been in the village one morning by five o'clock, to borrow "twa chappins of ale and a kipper" for the messenger's refreshment, and the poor fellow had been ill for twenty-four hours at Luckie Sma'trash's, in consequence of dining upon "saut saumon and sour drink." So that the existence of a correspondence betwixt the Marquis and his distressed kinsman, which Sir William Ashton had sometimes treated as a bugbear, was proved beyond the possibility of further doubt.

The alarm of the Lord Keeper became very serious. Since the Claim of Right, (*n*) the power of appealing from the decisions of the civil court to the Estates of Parliament, which had formerly been held incompetent, had in many instances been claimed, and in some allowed, and he had no small reason to apprehend the issue, if the English House of Lords should be disposed to act upon an appeal from the Master of Ravenswood "for remeid in law." It would resolve into an equitable claim, and be decided, perhaps, upon the broad principles of justice, which were not quite so favourable to the Lord Keeper as those of strict law. Besides, judging, though most inaccurately, from courts which he had himself known in the unhappy times preceding the Scottish Union, the Keeper might have too much right to think, that in the House to which his lawsuits were to be transferred, the old maxim might prevail in Scotland which was too well recognized in former times,—"Show me the man, and I'll show you the law." The high and unbiassed character of English judicial proceedings was then little known in Scotland; and the extension of them to that country was one of the most valuable advantages which it gained by the Union. But this was a blessing which the Lord Keeper, who had lived under another system, could not have the means of foreseeing. In the loss of his political consequence, he anticipated the loss of his lawsuit. Meanwhile, every report which reached him served to render the success of the Marquis's intrigues the more probable, and the Lord Keeper began to think it indispensable, that he should look round for some kind of protection against the coming storm. The timidity of his temper induced him to adopt mea-

sures of compromise and conciliation. The affair of the wild bull, properly managed, might, he thought, be made to facilitate a personal communication and reconciliation betwixt the Master and himself. He would then learn, if possible, what his own ideas were of the extent of his rights, and the means of enforcing them; and perhaps matters might be brought to a compromise, where one party was wealthy, and the other so very poor. A reconciliation with Ravenswood was likely to give him an opportunity to play his own game with the Marquis of A——. "And besides," said he to himself, "it will be an act of generosity to raise up the heir of this distressed family; and if he is to be warmly and effectually befriended by the new government, who knows but my virtue may prove its own reward?"

Thus thought Sir William Ashton, covering with no unusual self-delusion his interested views with a hue of virtue; and having attained this point, his fancy strayed still farther. He began to bethink himself, "that if Ravenswood was to have a distinguished place of power and trust — and if such a union would sopite the heavier part of his unadjusted claims — there might be worse matches for his daughter Lucy — the Master might be reponed against the attainder — Lord Ravenswood was an ancient title, and the alliance would, in some measure, legitimate his own possession of the greater part of the Master's spoils, and make the surrender of the rest a subject of less bitter regret."

With these mingled and multifarious plans occupying his head, the Lord Keeper availed himself of my Lord Bittlebrains's repeated invitation to his residence, and thus came within a very few miles

of Wolf's Crag. Here he found the lord of the mansion absent, but was courteously received by the lady, who expected her husband's immediate return. She expressed her particular delight at seeing Miss Ashton, and appointed the hounds to be taken out for the Lord Keeper's special amusement. He readily entered into the proposal, as giving him an opportunity to reconnoitre Wolf's Crag, and perhaps to make some acquaintance with the owner, if he should be tempted from his desolate mansion by the chase. Lockhard had his orders to endeavour on his part to make some acquaintance with the inmates of the castle, and we have seen how he played his part.

The accidental storm did more to further the Lord Keeper's plan of forming a personal acquaintance with young Ravenswood, than his most sanguine expectations could have anticipated. His fear of the young nobleman's personal resentment had greatly decreased, since he considered him as formidable from his legal claims, and the means he might have of enforcing them. But although he thought, not unreasonably, that only desperate circumstances drove men on desperate measures, it was not without a secret terror, which shook his heart within him, that he first felt himself enclosed within the desolate Tower of Wolf's Crag; a place so well fitted, from solitude and strength, to be a scene of violence and vengeance. The stern reception at first given to them by the Master of Ravenswood, and the difficulty he felt in explaining to that injured nobleman what guests were under the shelter of his roof, did not soothe these alarms; so that when Sir William Ashton heard the door of the court-yard shut behind him with violence,

the words of Alice rung in his ears, "that he had drawn on matters too hardly with so fierce a race as those of Ravenswood, and that they would bide their time to be avenged."

The subsequent frankness of the Master's hospitality, as their acquaintance increased, abated the apprehensions these recollections were calculated to excite; and it did not escape Sir William Ashton, that it was to Lucy's grace and beauty he owed the change in their host's behaviour.

All these thoughts thronged upon him when he took possession of the secret chamber. The iron lamp, the unfurnished apartment, more resembling a prison than a place of ordinary repose, the hoarse and ceaseless sound of the waves rushing against the base of the rock on which the castle was founded, saddened and perplexed his mind. To his own successful machinations, the ruin of the family had been in a great measure owing, but his disposition was crafty and not cruel; so that actually to witness the desolation and distress he had himself occasioned, was as painful to him as it would be to the humane mistress of a family to superintend in person the execution of the lambs and poultry which are killed by her own directions. At the same time, when he thought of the alternative, of restoring to Ravenswood a large proportion of his spoils, or of adopting, as an ally and member of his own family, the heir of this impoverished house, he felt as the spider may be supposed to do, when his whole web, the intricacies of which had been planned with so much art, is destroyed by the chance sweep of a broom. And then, if he should commit himself too far in this matter, it gave rise to a perilous question, which many a good husband, when under

temptation to act as a free agent, has asked himself without being able to return a satisfactory answer; "What will my wife — what will Lady Ashton say?" On the whole, he came at length to the resolution in which minds of a weaker cast so often take refuge. He resolved to watch events, to take advantage of circumstances as they occurred, and regulate his conduct accordingly. In this spirit of temporizing policy, he at length composed his mind to rest.

CHAPTER XVI.

"A slight note I have about me for you, for the delivery of which you must excuse me. It is an offer that friendship calls upon me to do, and no way offensive to you, since I desire nothing but right upon both sides."

King and no King.

WHEN Ravenswood and his guest met in the morning, the gloom of the Master's spirit had in part returned. He, also, had passed a night rather of reflection than of slumber; and the feelings which he could not but entertain towards Lucy Ashton, had to support a severe conflict against those which he had so long nourished against her father. To clasp in friendship the hand of the enemy of his house, to entertain him under his roof, to exchange with him the courtesies and the kindness of domestic familiarity, was a degradation which his proud spirit could not be bent to without a struggle.

But the ice being once broken, the Lord Keeper was resolved it should not have time again to freeze. It had been part of his plan to stun and confuse Ravenswood's ideas, by a complicated and technical statement of the matters which had been in debate betwixt their families, justly thinking that it would be difficult for a youth of his age to follow the expositions of a practical lawyer, concerning actions of compt and reckoning, and of multiplepoindings, and adjudications and wadsets, proper and improper, and poindings of the ground, and declarations of the

expiry of the legal. Thus, thought Sir William, I shall have all the grace of appearing perfectly communicative, while my party will derive very little advantage from any thing I may tell him. He therefore took Ravenswood aside into the deep recess of a window in the hall, and resuming the discourse of the preceding evening, expressed a hope that his young friend would assume some patience, in order to hear him enter into a minute and explanatory detail of those unfortunate circumstances, in which his late honourable father had stood at variance with the Lord Keeper. The Master of Ravenswood coloured highly, but was silent; and the Lord Keeper, though not greatly approving the sudden heightening of his auditor's complexion, commenced the history of a bond for twenty thousand marks, advanced by his father to the father of Allan Lord Ravenswood, and was proceeding to detail the executorial proceedings by which this large sum had been rendered a *debitum fundi*, (*o*) when he was interrupted by the Master.

"It is not in this place," he said, "that I can hear Sir William Ashton's explanation of the matters in question between us. It is not here, where my father died of a broken heart, that I can with decency or temper investigate the cause of his distress. I might remember that I was a son, and forget the duties of a host. A time, however, there must come, when these things shall be discussed in a place and in a presence where both of us will have equal freedom to speak and to hear."

"Any time," the Lord Keeper said, "any place, was alike to those who sought nothing but justice. Yet it would seem he was, in fairness, entitled to some premonition respecting the grounds upon which

the Master proposed to impugn the whole train of legal proceedings, which had been so well and ripely advised in the only courts competent."

"Sir William Ashton," answered the Master, with warmth, "the lands which you now occupy were granted to my remote ancestor for services done with his sword against the English invaders. How they have glided from us by a train of proceedings that seem to be neither sale, nor mortgage, nor adjudication for debt, but a nondescript and entangled mixture of all these rights — how annual-rent has been accumulated upon principal, and no nook or coign of legal advantage left unoccupied, until our interest in our hereditary property seems to have melted away like an icicle in thaw — all this you understand better than I do. I am willing, however, to suppose, from the frankness of your conduct towards me, that I may in a great measure have mistaken your personal character, and that things may have appeared right and fitting to you, a skilful and practised lawyer, which to my ignorant understanding seem very little short of injustice and gross oppression."

"And you, my dear Master," answered Sir William, "you, permit me to say, have been equally misrepresented to me. I was taught to believe you a fierce, imperious, hot-headed youth, ready, at the slightest provocation, to throw your sword into the scales of justice, and to appeal to those rude and forcible measures from which civil polity has long protected the people of Scotland. Then, since we were mutually mistaken in each other, why should not the young nobleman be willing to listen to the old lawyer, while, at least, he explains the points of difference betwixt them?"

"No, my lord," answered Ravenswood; "it is in the House of British Peers,[1] whose honour must be equal to their rank — it is in the court of last resort that we must parley together. The belted lords of Britain, her ancient peers, must decide, if it is their will that a house, not the least noble of their members, shall be stripped of their possessions, the reward of the patriotism of generations, as the pawn of a wretched mechanic becomes forfeit to the usurer the instant the hour of redemption has passed away. If they yield to the grasping severity of the creditor, and to the gnawing usury that eats into our lands as moths into a raiment, it will be of more evil consequence to them and their posterity than to Edgar Ravenswood — I shall still have my sword and my cloak, and can follow the profession of arms wherever a trumpet shall sound."

As he pronounced these words, in a firm yet melancholy tone, he raised his eyes, and suddenly encountered those of Lucy Ashton, who had stolen unawares on their interview, and observed her looks fastened on them with an expression of enthusiastic interest and admiration, which had wrapt her for the moment beyond the fear of discovery. The noble form and fine features of Ravenswood, fired with the pride of birth and sense of internal dignity — the mellow and expressive tones of his voice, the desolate state of his fortunes, and the indifference with which he seemed to endure and to dare the worst that might befall, rendered him a dangerous object of contemplation for a maiden already too much disposed to dwell upon recollections connected with him. When their eyes encountered each other, both blushed deeply, conscious of some strong in-

[1] Note III.—Appeal to Parliament.

ternal emotion, and shunned again to meet each other's look.

Sir William Ashton had, of course, closely watched the expression of their countenances. "I need fear," said he internally, "neither Parliament nor protestation; I have an effectual mode of reconciling myself with this hot-tempered young fellow, in case he shall become formidable. The present object is, at all events, to avoid committing ourselves. The hook is fixed; we will not strain the line too soon — it is as well to reserve the privilege of slipping it loose, if we do not find the fish worth landing."

In this selfish and cruel calculation upon the supposed attachment of Ravenswood to Lucy, he was so far from considering the pain he might give to the former, by thus dallying with his affections, that he even did not think upon the risk of involving his own daughter in the perils of an unfortunate passion; as if her predilection, which could not escape his attention, were like the flame of a taper, which might be lighted or extinguished at pleasure. But Providence had prepared a dreadful requital for this keen observer of human passions, who had spent his life in securing advantages to himself by artfully working upon the passions of others.

Caleb Balderstone now came to announce that breakfast was prepared; for in those days of substantial feeding, the relics of the supper amply furnished forth the morning meal. Neither did he forget to present to the Lord Keeper, with great reverence, a morning-draught in a large pewter cup, garnished with leaves of parsley and scurvy-grass. He craved pardon, of course, for having omitted to serve it in the great silver standing cup as behoved, being that

it was at present in a silversmith's in Edinburgh, for the purpose of being overlaid with gilt.

"In Edinburgh like enough," said Ravenswood; "but in what place, or for what purpose, I am afraid neither you nor I know."

"Aweel!" said Caleb, peevishly, "there's a man standing at the gate already this morning — that's ae thing that I ken — Does your honour ken whether ye will speak wi' him or no?"

"Does he wish to speak with me, Caleb?"

"Less will no serve him," said Caleb; "but ye had best take a visie of him through the wicket before opening the gate — it's no every ane we suld let into this castle."

"What! do you suppose him to be a messenger come to arrest me for debt?" said Ravenswood.

"A messenger arrest your honour for debt, and in your Castle of Wolf's Crag! — Your honour is jesting wi' auld Caleb this morning." However, he whispered in his ear as he followed him out, "I would be loath to do ony decent man a prejudice in your honour's gude opinion; but I would tak twa looks o' that chield before I let him within these walls."

He was not an officer of the law, however; being no less a person than Captain Craigengelt, with his nose as red as a comfortable cup of brandy could make it, his laced cocked-hat set a little aside upon the top of his black riding periwig, a sword by his side, and pistols at his holsters, and his person arrayed in a riding suit, laid over with tarnished lace, — the very moral of one who would say, Stand, to a true man.

When the Master had recognised him, he ordered the gates to be opened. "I suppose," he said, "Cap-

tain Craigengelt, there are no such weighty matters betwixt you and me, but may be discussed in this place. I have company in the castle at present, and the terms upon which we last parted must excuse my asking you to make part of them."

Craigengelt, although possessing the very perfection of impudence, was somewhat abashed by this unfavourable reception. "He had no intention," he said, "to force himself upon the Master of Ravenswood's hospitality — he was in the honourable service of bearing a message to him from a friend, otherwise the Master of Ravenswood should not have had reason to complain of this intrusion."

"Let it be short, sir," said the Master, "for that will be the best apology. Who is the gentleman who is so fortunate as to have your services as a messenger?"

"My friend Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw," answered Craigengelt, with conscious importance, and that confidence which the acknowledged courage of his principal inspired, "who conceives himself to have been treated by you with something much short of the respect which he had reason to demand, and therefore is resolved to exact satisfaction. I bring with me," said he, taking a piece of paper out of his pocket, "the precise length of his sword; and he requests you will meet him, accompanied by a friend, and equally armed, at any place within a mile of the castle, when I shall give attendance as umpire, or second, on his behoof."

"Satisfaction — and equal arms!" repeated Ravenswood, who, the reader will recollect, had no reason to suppose he had given the slightest offence to his late inmate — "upon my word, Captain Craigengelt, either you have invented the most impro-

bable falsehood that ever came into the mind of such a person, or your morning-draught has been somewhat of the strongest. What could persuade Bucklaw to send me such a message?"

"For that, sir," replied Craigengelt, "I am desired to refer you to what, in duty to my friend, I am to term your inhospitality in excluding him from your house, without reasons assigned."

"It is impossible," replied the Master; "he cannot be such a fool as to interpret actual necessity as an insult. Nor do I believe, that, knowing my opinion of you, Captain, he would have employed the services of so slight and inconsiderable a person as yourself upon such an errand, as I certainly could expect no man of honour to act with you in the office of umpire."

"I slight and inconsiderable!" said Craigengelt, raising his voice, and laying his hand on his cutlass; "if it were not that the quarrel of my friend craves the precedence, and is in dependence before my own, I would give you to understand" ——

"I can understand nothing upon your explanation, Captain Craigengelt. Be satisfied of that, and oblige me with your departure."

"D——n!" muttered the bully; "and is this the answer which I am to carry back to an honourable message?"

"Tell the Laird of Bucklaw," answered Ravenswood, "if you are really sent by him, that when he sends me his cause of grievance by a person fitting to carry such an errand betwixt him and me, I will either explain it or maintain it."

"Then, Master, you will at least cause to be returned to Hayston, by my hands, his property which is remaining in your possession."

"Whatever property Bucklaw may have left behind him, sir," replied the Master, "shall be returned to him by my servant, as you do not show me any credentials from him which entitle you to receive it."

"Well, Master," said Captain Craigengelt, with malice which even his fear of the consequences could not suppress, — "you have this morning done me an egregious wrong and dishonour, but far more to yourself. A castle indeed!" he continued, looking around him; "why, this is worse than a *coupe-gorge* house, where they receive travellers to plunder them of their property."

"You insolent rascal," said the Master, raising his cane, and making a grasp at the Captain's bridle, "if you do not depart without uttering another syllable, I will batoon you to death!"

At the motion of the Master towards him, the bully turned so rapidly round, that with some difficulty he escaped throwing down his horse, whose hoofs struck fire from the rocky pavement in every direction. Recovering him, however, with the bridle, he pushed for the gate, and rode sharply back again in the direction of the village.

As Ravenswood turned round to leave the courtyard after this dialogue, he found that the Lord Keeper had descended from the hall, and witnessed, though at the distance prescribed by politeness, his interview with Craigengelt.

"I have seen," said the Lord Keeper, "that gentleman's face, and at no great distance of time — his name is Craig — Craig — something, is it not?"

"Craigengelt is the fellow's name," said the Master, "at least that by which he passes at present."

"Craig-in-guilt," said Caleb, punning upon the word *craig*, which in Scotch signifies throat; "if he is Craig-in-guilt just now, he is as likely to be Craig-in-peril as ony chield I ever saw — the loon has woodie written on his very visnomy, and I wad wager twa and a plack that hemp plaits his cravat yet."

"You understand physiognomy, good Mr. Caleb," said the Keeper, smiling; "I assure you the gentleman has been near such a consummation before now — for I most distinctly recollect, that, upon occasion of a journey which I made about a fortnight ago to Edinburgh, I saw Mr. Craigengelt, or whatever is his name, undergo a severe examination before the Privy Council."

"Upon what account?" said the Master of Ravenswood, with some interest.

The question led immediately to a tale which the Lord Keeper had been very anxious to introduce, when he could find a graceful and fitting opportunity. He took hold of the Master's arm, and led him back towards the hall. "The answer to your question," he said, "though it is a ridiculous business, is only fit for your own ear."

As they entered the hall, he again took the Master apart into one of the recesses of the window, where it will be easily believed that Miss Ashton did not venture again to intrude upon their conference.

CHAPTER XVII.

> Here is a father now
> Will truck his daughter for a foreign venture,
> Make her the stop-gap to some canker'd feud,
> Or fling her o'er, like Jonah, to the fishes,
> To appease the sea at highest.
>
> *Anonymous.*

THE Lord Keeper opened his discourse with an appearance of unconcern, marking, however, very carefully, the effect of his communication upon young Ravenswood.

"You are aware," he said, "my young friend, that suspicion is the natural vice of our unsettled times, and exposes the best and wisest of us to the imposition of artful rascals. If I had been disposed to listen to such the other day, or even if I had been the wily politician which you have been taught to believe me, you, Master of Ravenswood, instead of being at freedom, and with full liberty to solicit and act against me as you please, in defence of what you suppose to be your rights, would have been in the Castle of Edinburgh, or some other state prison; or, if you had escaped that destiny, it must have been by flight to a foreign country, and at the risk of a sentence of fugitation."

"My Lord Keeper," said the Master, "I think you would not jest on such a subject — yet it seems impossible you can be in earnest."

"Innocence," said the Lord Keeper, "is also confident, and sometimes, though very excusably, presumptuously so."

"I do not understand," said Ravenswood, "how a consciousness of innocence can be, in any case, accounted presumptuous."

"Imprudent, at least, it may be called," said Sir William Ashton, "since it is apt to lead us into the mistake of supposing that sufficiently evident to others, of which, in fact, we are only conscious ourselves. I have known a rogue, for this very reason, make a better defence than an innocent man could have done in the same circumstances of suspicion. Having no consciousness of innocence to support him, such a fellow applies himself to all the advantages which the law will afford him, and sometimes (if his counsel be men of talent) succeeds in compelling his judges to receive him as innocent. I remember the celebrated case of Sir Coolie Condiddle, of Condiddle, who was tried for theft under trust, of which all the world knew him guilty, and yet was not only acquitted, but lived to sit in judgment on honester folk."

"Allow me to beg you will return to the point," said the Master; "you seemed to say that I had suffered under some suspicion."

"Suspicion, Master? — ay, truly — and I can show you the proofs of it; if I happen only to have them with me. — Here, Lockhard" — His attendant came — "Fetch me the little private mail with the padlocks, that I recommended to your particular charge —d'ye hear?"

"Yes, my lord." Lockhard vanished; and the Keeper continued, as if half speaking to himself.

"I think the papers are with me — I think so,

for as I was to be in this country, it was natural for me to bring them with me. I have them, however, at Ravenswood Castle, that I am sure of — so perhaps you might condescend" ——

Here Lockhard entered, and put the leathern scrutoire, or mail-box, into his hands. The Keeper produced one or two papers, respecting the information laid before the Privy Council concerning the riot, as it was termed, at the funeral of Allan Lord Ravenswood, and the active share he had himself taken in quashing the proceedings against the Master. These documents had been selected with care, so as to irritate the natural curiosity of Ravenswood upon such a subject, without gratifying it, yet to show that Sir William Ashton had acted upon that trying occasion the part of an advocate and peacemaker betwixt him and the jealous authorities of the day. Having furnished his host with such subjects for examination, the Lord Keeper went to the breakfast-table, and entered into light conversation, addressed partly to old Caleb, whose resentment against the usurper of the Castle of Ravenswood began to be softened by his familiarity, and partly to his daughter.

After perusing these papers, the Master of Ravenswood remained for a minute or two with his hand pressed against his brow, in deep and profound meditation. He then again ran his eye hastily over the papers, as if desirous of discovering in them some deep purpose, or some mark of fabrication, which had escaped him at first perusal. Apparently the second reading confirmed the opinion which had pressed upon him at the first, for he started from the stone bench on which he was sitting, and, going to the Lord Keeper, took his hand, and, strongly

pressing it, asked his pardon repeatedly for the injustice he had done him, when it appeared he was experiencing, at his hands, the benefit of protection to his person, and vindication to his character.

The statesman received these acknowledgments at first with well-feigned surprise, and then with an affectation of frank cordiality. The tears began already to start from Lucy's blue eyes at viewing this unexpected and moving scene. To see the Master, late so haughty and reserved, and whom she had always supposed the injured person, supplicating her father for forgiveness, was a change at once surprising, flattering, and affecting.

"Dry your eyes, Lucy," said her father; "why should you weep, because your father, though a lawyer, is discovered to be a fair and honourable man? — What have you to thank me for, my dear Master," he continued, addressing Ravenswood, "that you would not have done in my case? '*Suum cuique tribuito*,' was the Roman justice, and I learned it when I studied Justinian. Besides, have you not overpaid me a thousand times, in saving the life of this dear child?"

"Yes," answered the Master, in all the remorse of self-accusation; "but the little service *I* did was an act of mere brutal instinct; *your* defence of my cause, when you knew how ill I thought of you, and how much I was disposed to be your enemy, was an act of generous, manly, and considerate wisdom."

"Pshaw!" said the Lord Keeper, "each of us acted in his own way; you as a gallant soldier, I as an upright judge and privy-councillor. We could not, perhaps, have changed parts — at least I should have made a very sorry *Tauridor*, and you, my good Master, though your cause is so excellent, might

have pleaded it perhaps worse yourself, than I who acted for you before the council."

"My generous friend!" said Ravenswood; — and with that brief word, which the Keeper had often lavished upon him, but which he himself now pronounced for the first time, he gave to his feudal enemy the full confidence of an haughty but honourable heart. The Master had been remarked among his contemporaries for sense and acuteness, as well as for his reserved, pertinacious, and irascible character. His prepossessions accordingly, however obstinate, were of a nature to give way before love and gratitude; and the real charms of the daughter, joined to the supposed services of the father, cancelled in his memory the vows of vengeance which he had taken so deeply on the eve of his father's funeral. But they had been heard and registered in the book of fate.

Caleb was present at this extraordinary scene, and he could conceive no other reason for a proceeding so extraordinary than an alliance betwixt the houses, and Ravenswood Castle assigned for the young lady's dowry. As for Lucy, when Ravenswood uttered the most passionate excuses for his ungrateful negligence, she could but smile through her tears, and, as she abandoned her hand to him, assure him, in broken accents, of the delight with which she beheld the complete reconciliation between her father and her deliverer. Even the statesman was moved and affected by the fiery, unreserved, and generous self-abandonment with which the Master of Ravenswood renounced his feudal enmity, and threw himself without hesitation upon his forgiveness. His eyes glistened as he looked upon a couple who were obviously be-

coming attached, and who seemed made for each other. He thought how high the proud and chivalrous character of Ravenswood might rise under many circumstances, in which *he* found himself "over-crowed," to use a phrase of Spenser, and kept under, by his brief pedigree, and timidity of disposition. Then his daughter — his favourite child — his constant playmate — seemed formed to live happy in a union with such a commanding spirit as Ravenswood; and even the fine, delicate, fragile form of Lucy Ashton seemed to require the support of the Master's muscular strength and masculine character. And it was not merely during a few minutes that Sir William Ashton looked upon their marriage as a probable and even desirable event, for a full hour intervened ere his imagination was crossed by recollection of the Master's poverty, and the sure displeasure of Lady Ashton. It is certain, that the very unusual flow of kindly feeling with which the Lord Keeper had been thus surprised, was one of the circumstances which gave much tacit encouragement to the attachment between the Master and his daughter, and led both the lovers distinctly to believe that it was a connexion which would be most agreeable to him. He himself was supposed to have admitted this in effect, when, long after the catastrophe of their love, he used to warn his hearers against permitting their feelings to obtain an ascendency over their judgment, and affirm, that the greatest misfortune of his life was owing to a very temporary predominance of sensibility over self-interest. It must be owned, if such was the case, he was long and severely punished for an offence of very brief duration.

After some pause, the Lord Keeper resumed the conversation. — "In your surprise at finding me an honester man than you expected, you have lost your curiosity about this Craigengelt, my good Master; and yet your name was brought in, in the course of that matter too."

"The scoundrel!" said Ravenswood; "my connexion with him was of the most temporary nature possible; and yet I was very foolish to hold any communication with him at all. — What did he say of me?"

"Enough," said the Keeper, "to excite the very loyal terrors of some of our sages, who are for proceeding against men on the mere grounds of suspicion or mercenary information. — Some nonsense about your proposing to enter into the service of France, or of the Pretender, I don't recollect which, but which the Marquis of A——, one of your best friends, and another person, whom some call one of your worst and most interested enemies, could not, somehow, be brought to listen to."

"I am obliged to my honourable friend — and yet" — shaking the Lord Keeper's hand — "and yet I am still more obliged to my honourable enemy."

"*Inimicus amicissimus*," said the Lord Keeper, returning the pressure; "but this gentleman — this Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw — I am afraid the poor young man — I heard the fellow mention his name — is under very bad guidance."

"He is old enough to govern himself," answered the Master.

"Old enough, perhaps, but scarce wise enough, if he has chosen this fellow for his *fidus Achates*. Why, he lodged an information against him — that is, such a consequence might have ensued from his

examination, had we not looked rather at the character of the witness than the tenor of his evidence."

"Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw," said the Master, "is, I believe, a most honourable man, and capable of nothing that is mean or disgraceful."

"Capable of much that is unreasonable, though; that you must needs allow, Master. Death will soon put him in possession of a fair estate, if he hath it not already; old Lady Girnington — an excellent person, excepting that her inveterate ill-nature rendered her intolerable to the whole world — is probably dead by this time. Six heirs portioners have successively died to make her wealthy. I know the estates well; they march[1] with my own — a noble property."

"I am glad of it," said Ravenswood, "and should be more so, were I confident that Bucklaw would change his company and habits with his fortunes. This appearance of Craigengelt, acting in the capacity of his friend, is a most vile augury for his future respectability."

"He is a bird of evil omen, to be sure," said the Keeper, "and croaks of jail and gallows-tree. — But I see Mr. Caleb grows impatient for our return to breakfast."

[1] *i. e.* They are bounded by my own.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Sir, stay at home and take an old man's counsel;
Seek not to bask you by a stranger's hearth;
Our own blue smoke is warmer than their fire.
Domestic food is wholesome, though 'tis homely,
And foreign dainties poisonous, though tasteful.

The French Courtezan.

THE Master of Ravenswood took an opportunity to leave his guests to prepare for their departure, while he himself made the brief arrangements necessary previous to his absence from Wolf's Crag for a day or two. It was necessary to communicate with Caleb on this occasion, and he found that faithful servitor in his sooty and ruinous den, greatly delighted with the departure of their visitors, and computing how long, with good management, the provisions which had been unexpended might furnish forth the Master's table. "He's nae belly god, that's ae blessing; and Bucklaw's gane, that could have eaten a horse behind the saddle. Cresses or water-purpie, and a bit ait-cake, can serve the Master for breakfast as weel as Caleb. Then for dinner — there's no muckle left on the spule-bane; it will brander, though — it will brander[1] very weel."

His triumphant calculations were interrupted by the Master, who communicated to him, not without some hesitation, his purpose to ride with the

[1] Broil.

Lord Keeper as far as Ravenswood Castle, and to remain there for a day or two.

"The mercy of Heaven forbid!" said the old serving-man, turning as pale as the table-cloth which he was folding up.

"And why, Caleb?" said his master, "why should the mercy of Heaven forbid my returning the Lord Keeper's visit?"

"Oh, sir!" replied Caleb — "O Mr. Edgar! I am your servant, and it ill becomes me to speak — but I am an auld servant — have served baith your father and gudesire, and mind to have seen Lord Randal, your great-grandfather — but that was when I was a bairn."

"And what of all this, Balderstone?" said the Master; "what can it possibly have to do with my paying some ordinary civility to a neighbour?"

"O Mr. Edgar, — that is, my lord!" answered the butler, "your ain conscience tells you it isna for your father's son to be neighbouring wi' the like o' him — it isna for the credit of the family. An he were ance come to terms, and to gie ye back your ain, e'en though ye suld honour his house wi' your alliance, I suldna say na — for the young leddy is a winsome sweet creature — But keep your ain state wi' them — I ken the race o' them weel — they will think the mair o' ye."

"Why, now, you go farther than I do, Caleb," said the Master, drowning a certain degree of consciousness in a forced laugh; "you are for marrying me into a family that you will not allow me to visit — how's this? — and you look as pale as death besides."

"O, sir," repeated Caleb again, "you would but laugh if I tauld it; but Thomas the Rhymer, whose

tongue couldna be fause, spoke the word of your house that will e'en prove ower true if you go to Ravenswood this day — O, that it should e'er have been fulfilled in my time!"

"And what is it, Caleb?" said Ravenswood, wishing to soothe the fears of his old servant.

Caleb replied, "he had never repeated the lines to living mortal — they were told to him by an auld priest that had been confessor to Lord Allan's father when the family were catholic. But mony a time," he said, "I hae soughed thae dark words ower to mysell, and, well-a-day! little did I think of their coming round this day."

"Truce with your nonsense, and let me hear the doggerel which has put it into your head," said the Master, impatiently.

With a quivering voice, and a cheek pale with apprehension, Caleb faltered out the following lines: —

> "When the last Laird of Ravenswood to Ravenswood shall ride,
> And woo a dead maiden to be his bride,
> He shall stable his steed in the Kelpie's flow,
> And his name shall be lost for evermoe!"

"I know the Kelpie's flow well enough," said the Master; "I suppose, at least, you mean the quick-sand betwixt this tower and Wolf's-hope; but why any man in his senses should stable a steed there" ——

"O, never speer ony thing about that, sir — God forbid we should ken what the prophecy means — but just bide you at hame, and let the strangers ride to Ravenswood by themselves. We have done eneugh for them; and to do mair, would be mair against the credit of the family than in its favour."

"Well, Caleb," said the Master, "I give you the best possible credit for your good advice on this occasion; but as I do not go to Ravenswood to seek a bride, dead or alive, I hope I shall choose a better stable for my horse than the Kelpie's quick sand, and especially as I have always had a particular dread of it since the patrol of dragoons were lost there ten years since. My father and I saw them from the tower struggling against the advancing tide, and they were lost long before any help could reach them."

"And they deserved it weel, the southern loons!" said Caleb; "what had they ado capering on our sands, and hindering a wheen honest folk frae bringing on shore a drap brandy? I hae seen them that busy, that I wad hae fired the auld culverin, or the demisaker that's on the south bartizan at them, only I was feared they might burst in the ganging aff."

Caleb's brain was now fully engaged with abuse of the English soldiery and excisemen, so that his master found no great difficulty in escaping from him and rejoining his guests. All was now ready for their departure; and one of the Lord Keeper's grooms having saddled the Master's steed, they mounted in the court-yard.

Caleb had, with much toil, opened the double doors of the outward gate, and thereat stationed himself, endeavouring, by the reverential, and, at the same time, consequential air which he assumed, to supply, by his own gaunt, wasted, and thin person, the absence of a whole baronial establishment of porters, warders, and liveried menials.

The Keeper returned his deep reverence with a cordial farewell, stooping at the same time from his horse, and sliding into the butler's hand the remune-

ration, which in those days was always given by a departing guest to the domestics of the family where he had been entertained. Lucy smiled on the old man with her usual sweetness, bade him adieu, and deposited her guerdon with a grace of action, and a gentleness of accent, which could not have failed to have won the faithful retainer's heart, but for Thomas the Rhymer, and the successful lawsuit against his master. As it was, he might have adopted the language of the Duke, in *As you Like it* —

> "Thou wouldst have better pleased me with this deed,
> If thou hadst told me of another father."

Ravenswood was at the lady's bridle-rein, encouraging her timidity, and guiding her horse carefully down the rocky path which led to the moor, when one of the servants announced from the rear that Caleb was calling loudly after them, desiring to speak with his master. Ravenswood felt it would look singular to neglect this summons, although inwardly cursing Caleb for his impertinent officiousness; therefore he was compelled to relinquish to Mr. Lockhard the agreeable duty in which he was engaged, and to ride back to the gate of the courtyard. Here he was beginning, somewhat peevishly, to ask Caleb the cause of his clamour, when the good old man exclaimed, "Whisht, sir! whisht, and let me speak just ae word that I couldna say afore folk — there" — (putting into his lord's hand the money he had just received) — "there's three gowd pieces — and ye'll want siller upby yonder — But stay, whisht now!" — for the Master was beginning to exclaim against this transference — "never say a word, but just see to get them changed in the

first town ye ride through, for they are bran new frae the mint, and kenspeckle a wee bit."

"You forget, Caleb," said his master, striving to force back the money on his servant, and extricate the bridle from his hold — "You forget that I have some gold pieces left of my own. Keep these to yourself, my old friend; and, once more, good day to you. I assure you I have plenty. You know you have managed that our living should cost us little or nothing."

"Aweel," said Caleb, "these will serve for you another time; but see ye hae eneugh, for, doubtless, for the credit of the family, there maun be some civility to the servants, and ye maun hae something to mak a show with when they say, Master, will you bet a broad piece? Then ye maun tak out your purse, and say, I carena if I do; and tak care no to agree on the articles of the wager, and just put up your purse again, and" ——

"This is intolerable, Caleb—I really must be gone."

"And you will go, then?" said Caleb, loosening his hold upon the Master's cloak, and changing his didactics into a pathetic and mournful tone — "And you *will* go, for a' I have told you about the prophecy, and the dead bride, and the Kelpie's quicksand? — Aweel! a wilful man maun hae his way — he that will to Cupar maun to Cupar. But pity of your life, sir, if ye be fowling or shooting in the Park — beware of drinking at the Mermaiden's well —— He's gane! he's down the path, arrow-flight after her! — The head is as clean taen aff the Ravenswood family this day, as I wad chap the head aff a sybo!"

The old butler looked long after his master, often clearing away the dew as it rose to his eyes, that

he might, as long as possible, distinguish his stately form from those of the other horsemen. "Close to her bridle-rein — ay, close to her bridle-rein! — Wisely saith the holy man, 'By this also you may know that woman hath dominion over all men;' — and without this lass would not our ruin have been a'thegither fulfilled."

With a heart fraught with such sad auguries did Caleb return to his necessary duties at Wolf's Crag, as soon as he could no longer distinguish the object of his anxiety among the group of riders, which diminished in the distance.

In the meantime the party pursued their route joyfully. Having once taken his resolution, the Master of Ravenswood was not of a character to hesitate or pause upon it. He abandoned himself to the pleasure he felt in Miss Ashton's company, and displayed an assiduous gallantry, which approached as nearly to gaiety as the temper of his mind and state of his family permitted. The Lord Keeper was much struck with his depth of observation, and the unusual improvement which he had derived from his studies. Of these accomplishments Sir William Ashton's profession and habits of society rendered him an excellent judge; and he well knew how to appreciate a quality to which he himself was a total stranger, — the brief and decided dauntlessness of the Master of Ravenswood's disposition, who seemed equally a stranger to doubt and to fear. In his heart the Lord Keeper rejoiced at having conciliated an adversary so formidable, while, with a mixture of pleasure and anxiety, he anticipated the great things his young companion might achieve, were the breath of court-favour to fill his sails.

"What could she desire," he thought, his mind always conjuring up opposition in the person of Lady Ashton to his now prevailing wish — "What could a woman desire in a match, more than the sopiting of a very dangerous claim, and the alliance of a son-in-law, noble, brave, well-gifted, and highly connected — sure to float whenever the tide sets his way — strong, exactly where we are weak, in pedigree and in the temper of a swordsman? — Sure no reasonable woman would hesitate. — But, alas!" — Here his argument was stopped by the consciousness that Lady Ashton was not always reasonable, in his sense of the word. "To prefer some clownish Merse laird to the gallant young nobleman, and to the secure possession of Ravenswood upon terms of easy compromise — it would be the act of a madwoman!"

Thus pondered the veteran politician, until they reached Bittlebrains' House, where it had been previously settled they were to dine and repose themselves, and prosecute their journey in the afternoon.

They were received with an excess of hospitality; and the most marked attention was offered to the Master of Ravenswood, in particular, by their noble entertainers. The truth was, that Lord Bittlebrains had obtained his peerage by a good deal of plausibility, an art of building up a character for wisdom upon a very trite style of commonplace eloquence, a steady observation of the changes of the times, and the power of rendering certain political services to those who could best reward them. His lady and he not feeling quite easy under their new honours, to which use had not adapted their feelings, were very desirous to procure the fraternal countenance of those who were

born denizens of the regions into which they had been exalted from a lower sphere. The extreme attention which they paid to the Master of Ravenswood, had its usual effect in exalting his importance in the eyes of the Lord Keeper, who, although he had a reasonable degree of contempt for Lord Bittlebrains' general parts, entertained a high opinion of the acuteness of his judgment in all matters of self-interest.

"I wish Lady Ashton had seen this," was his internal reflection; "no man knows so well as Bittlebrains on which side his bread is buttered; and he fawns on the Master like a beggar's messan on a cook. And my lady, too, bringing forward her beetle-browed misses to skirl and play upon the virginals, as if she said, pick and choose. They are no more comparable to Lucy than an owl is to a cygnet, and so they may carry their black brows to a farther market."

The entertainment being ended, our travellers, who had still to measure the longest part of their journey, resumed their horses; and after the Lord Keeper, the Master, and the domestics, had drunk *doch-an-dorroch*, or the stirrup-cup, in the liquors adapted to their various ranks, the cavalcade resumed its progress.

It was dark by the time they entered the avenue of Ravenswood Castle, a long straight line leading directly to the front of the house, flanked with huge elm-trees, which sighed to the night-wind, as if they compassionated the heir of their ancient proprietors, who now returned to their shades in the society, and almost in the retinue, of their new master. Some feelings of the same kind oppressed the mind of the Master himself. He gradually

became silent, and dropped a little behind the lady, at whose bridle-rein he had hitherto waited with such devotion. He well recollected the period, when, at the same hour in the evening, he had accompanied his father, as that nobleman left, never again to return to it, the mansion from which he derived his name and title. The extensive front of the old castle, on which he remembered having often looked back, was then "as black as mourning weed." The same front now glanced with many lights, some throwing far forward into the night a fixed and stationary blaze, and others hurrying from one window to another, intimating the bustle and busy preparation preceding their arrival, which had been intimated by an avant-courier. The contrast pressed so strongly upon the Master's heart, as to awaken some of the sterner feelings with which he had been accustomed to regard the new lord of his paternal domain, and to impress his countenance with an air of severe gravity, when, alighted from his horse, he stood in the hall no longer his own, surrounded by the numerous menials of its present owner.

The Lord Keeper, when about to welcome him with the cordiality which their late intercourse seemed to render proper, became aware of the change, refrained from his purpose, and only intimated the ceremony of reception by a deep reverence to his guest, seeming thus delicately to share the feelings which predominated on his brow.

Two upper domestics, bearing each a huge pair of silver candlesticks, now marshalled the company into a large saloon, or withdrawing room, where new alterations impressed upon Ravenswood the superior wealth of the present inhabitants of the

castle. The mouldering tapestry, which, in his father's time, had half covered the walls of this stately apartment, and half streamed from them in tatters, had given place to a complete finishing of wainscot, the cornice of which, as well as the frames of the various compartments, were ornamented with festoons of flowers and with birds, which, though carved in oak, seemed, such was the art of the chisel, actually to swell their throats, and flutter their wings. Several old family portraits of armed heroes of the house of Ravenswood, together with a suit or two of old armour, and some military weapons, had given place to those of King William and Queen Mary, of Sir Thomas Hope and Lord Stair, two distinguished Scottish lawyers. The pictures of the Lord Keeper's father and mother were also to be seen; the latter, sour, shrewish, and solemn, in her black hood and close pinners, with a book of devotion in her hand; the former, exhibiting beneath a black silk Geneva cowl, or skull-cap, which sate as close to the head as if it had been shaven, a pinched, peevish, puritanical set of features, terminating in a hungry, reddish, peaked beard, forming on the whole a countenance, in the expression of which the hypocrite seemed to contend with the miser and the knave. And it is to make room for such scarecrows as these, thought Ravenswood, that my ancestors have been torn down from the walls which they erected! He looked at them again, and, as he looked, the recollection of Lucy Ashton (for she had not entered the apartment with them) seemed less lively in his imagination. There were also two or three Dutch drolleries, as the pictures of Ostade and Teniers were then termed, with one good painting of the

Italian school. There was, besides, a noble full-length of the Lord Keeper in his robes of office, placed beside his lady in silk and ermine, a haughty beauty, bearing in her looks all the pride of the House of Douglas, from which she was descended. The painter, notwithstanding his skill, overcome by the reality, or, perhaps, from a suppressed sense of humour, had not been able to give the husband on the canvas that air of awful rule and right supremacy, which indicates the full possession of domestic authority. It was obvious, at the first glance, that, despite mace and gold frogs, the Lord Keeper was somewhat henpecked. The floor of this fine saloon was laid with rich carpets, huge fires blazed in the double chimneys, and ten silver sconces, reflecting with their bright plates the lights which they supported, made the whole seem as brilliant as day.

"Would you choose any refreshment, Master?" said Sir William Ashton, not unwilling to break the awkward silence.

He received no answer, the Master being so busily engaged in marking the various changes which had taken place in the apartment, that he hardly heard the Lord Keeper address him. A repetition of the offer of refreshment, with the addition, that the family meal would be presently ready, compelled his attention, and reminded him, that he acted a weak, perhaps even a ridiculous part, in suffering himself to be overcome by the circumstances in which he found himself. He compelled himself, therefore, to enter into conversation with Sir William Ashton, with as much appearance of indifference as he could well command.

"You will not be surprised, Sir William, that I

am interested in the changes you have made for the better in this apartment. In my father's time, after our misfortunes compelled him to live in retirement, it was little used, except by me as a playroom, when the weather would not permit me to go abroad. In that recess was my little workshop, where I treasured the few carpenter's tools which old Caleb procured for me, and taught me how to use — there, in yonder corner, under that handsome silver sconce, I kept my fishing-rods, and hunting poles, bows, and arrows."

"I have a young birkie," said the Lord Keeper, willing to change the tone of the conversation, "of much the same turn — He is never happy, save when he is in the field — I wonder he is not here. — Here, Lockhard — send William Shaw for Mr. Henry — I suppose he is, as usual, tied to Lucy's apron string — that foolish girl, Master, draws the whole family after her at her pleasure."

Even this allusion to his daughter, though artfully thrown out, did not recall Ravenswood from his own topic.

"We were obliged to leave," he said, "some armour and portraits in this apartment — may I ask where they have been removed to?"

"Why," answered the Keeper, with some hesitation, "the room was fitted up in our absence — and *cedant arma togæ*, is the maxim of lawyers, you know — I am afraid it has been here somewhat too literally complied with. I hope — I believe they are safe — I am sure I gave orders — may I hope that when they are recovered, and put in proper order, you will do me the honour to accept them at my hand, as an atonement for their accidental derangement?"

The Master of Ravenswood bowed stiffly, and, with folded arms, again resumed his survey of the room.

Henry, a spoilt boy of fifteen, burst into the room, and ran up to his father. "Think of Lucy, papa; she has come home so cross and so fractious, that she will not go down to the stable to see my new pony, that Bob Wilson brought from the Mull of Galloway."

"I think you were very unreasonable to ask her," said the Keeper.

"Then you are as cross as she is," answered the boy; "but when mamma comes home, she'll claw up both your mittens."

"Hush your impertinence, you little forward imp!" said his father; "where is your tutor?"

"Gone to a wedding at Dunbar — I hope he'll get a haggis to his dinner;" and he began to sing the old Scottish song,

"There was a haggis in Dunbar, (*p*)
Fal de ral, &c.
Mony better and few waur,
Fal de ral," &c.

"I am much obliged to Mr. Cordery for his attentions," said the Lord Keeper; "and pray who has had the charge of you while I was away, Mr. Henry?"

"Norman and Bob Wilson — forby my own self."

"A groom and a gamekeeper, and your own silly self — proper guardians for a young advocate! — Why, you will never know any statutes but those against shooting red-deer, killing salmon, and" ——

"And speaking of red-game," said the young scape-grace, interrupting his father without scruple

or hesitation, "Norman has shot a buck, and I showed the branches to Lucy, and she says they have but eight tynes; and she says that you killed a deer with Lord Bittlebrains' hounds, when you were west away, and, do you know, she says it had ten tynes — is it true?"

"It may have had twenty, Henry, for what I know; but if you go to that gentleman, he can tell you all about it — Go speak to him, Henry — it is the Master of Ravenswood."

While they conversed thus, the father and son were standing by the fire; and the Master having walked towards the upper end of the apartment, stood with his back towards them, apparently engaged in examining one of the paintings. The boy ran up to him, and pulled him by the skirt of the coat with the freedom of a spoilt child, saying, "I say, sir — if you please to tell me" —— but when the Master turned round, and Henry saw his face, he became suddenly and totally disconcerted — walked two or three steps backward, and still gazed on Ravenswood with an air of fear and wonder, which had totally banished from his features their usual expression of pert vivacity.

"Come to me, young gentleman," said the Master, "and I will tell you all I know about the hunt."

"Go to the gentleman, Henry," said his father; "you are not used to be so shy."

But neither invitation nor exhortation had any effect on the boy. On the contrary, he turned round as soon as he had completed his survey of the Master, and walking as cautiously as if he had been treading upon eggs, he glided back to his father, and pressed as close to him as possible.

Ravenswood, to avoid hearing the dispute betwixt the father and the over-indulged boy, thought it most polite to turn his face once more towards the pictures, and pay no attention to what they said.

"Why do you not speak to the Master, you little fool?" said the Lord Keeper.

"I am afraid," said Henry, in a very low tone of voice.

"Afraid, you goose!" said his father, giving him a slight shake by the collar, — "What makes you afraid?"

"What makes him so like the picture of Sir Malise Ravenswood, then?" said the boy, whispering.

"What picture, you natural?" said his father. "I used to think you only a scape-grace, but I believe you will turn out a born idiot."

"I tell you it is the picture of old Malise of Ravenswood, and he is as like it as if he had loupen out of the canvas; and it is up in the old Baron's hall that the maids launder the clothes in, and it has armour, and not a coat like the gentleman — and he has not a beard and whiskers like the picture — and it has another kind of thing about the throat, and no band-strings as he has — and" ——

"And why should not the gentleman be like his ancestor, you silly boy?" said the Lord Keeper.

"Ay; but if he is come to chase us all out of the castle," said the boy, "and has twenty men at his back in disguise — and is come to say, with a hollow voice, *I bide my time* — and is to kill you on the hearth as Malise did the other man, and whose blood is still to be seen!"

"Hush! nonsense!" said the Lord Keeper, not himself much pleased to hear these disagreeable co-

incidences forced on his notice.—"Master, here comes Lockhard to say supper is served."

And, at the same instant, Lucy entered at another door, having changed her dress since her return. The exquisite feminine beauty of her countenance, now shaded only by a profusion of sunny tresses; the sylph-like form disencumbered of her heavy riding-skirt, and mantled in azure silk; the grace of her manner and of her smile, cleared, with a celerity which surprised the Master himself, all the gloomy and unfavourable thoughts which had for some time overclouded his fancy. In those features, so simply sweet, he could trace no alliance with the pinched visage of the peak-bearded, black-capped puritan, or his starched withered spouse, with the craft expressed in the Lord Keeper's countenance, or the haughtiness which predominated in that of his lady; and, while he gazed on Lucy Ashton, she seemed to be an angel descended on earth, unallied to the coarser mortals among whom she deigned to dwell for a season. Such is the power of beauty over a youthful and enthusiastic fancy.

CHAPTER XIX.

——————— I do too ill in this,
And must not think but that a parent's plaint
Will move the heavens to pour forth misery
Upon the head of disobediency.
Yet reason tells us, parents are o'erseen,
When with too strict a rein they do hold in
Their child's affection, and control that love,
Which the high powers divine inspire them with.

The Hog hath lost his Pearl.

THE feast of Ravenswood Castle was as remarkable for its profusion, as that of Wolf's Crag had been for its ill-veiled penury. The Lord Keeper might feel internal pride at the contrast, but he had too much tact to suffer it to appear. On the contrary, he seemed to remember with pleasure what he called Mr. Balderstone's bachelor's meal, and to be rather disgusted than pleased with the display upon his own groaning board.

"We do these things," he said, "because others do them — but I was bred a plain man at my father's frugal table, and I should like well would my wife and family permit me to return to my sowens and my poor-man-of-mutton." [1]

This was a little overstretched. The Master only answered, "That different ranks — I mean," said he, correcting himself, "different degrees of wealth require a different style of housekeeping."

[1] Note IV. — Poor-Man-of-Mutton.

This dry remark put a stop to further conversation on the subject, nor is it necessary to record that which was substituted in its place. The evening was spent with freedom, and even cordiality; and Henry had so far overcome his first apprehensions, that he had settled a party for coursing a stag with the representative and living resemblance of grim Sir Malise of Ravenswood, called the Revenger. The next morning was the appointed time. It rose upon active sportsmen and successful sport. The banquet came in course; and a pressing invitation to tarry yet another day was given and accepted. This Ravenswood had resolved should be the last of his stay; but he recollected he had not yet visited the ancient and devoted servant of his house, old Alice, and it was but kind to dedicate one morning to the gratification of so ancient an adherent.

To visit Alice, therefore, a day was devoted, and Lucy was the Master's guide upon the way. Henry, it is true, accompanied them, and took from their walk the air of a *tête-à-tête*, while, in reality, it was little else, considering the variety of circumstances which occurred to prevent the boy from giving the least attention to what passed between his companions. Now a rook settled on a branch within shot — anon a hare crossed their path, and Henry and his greyhound went astray in pursuit of it — then he had to hold a long conversation with the forester, which detained him a while behind his companions — and again he went to examine the earth of a badger, which carried him on a good way before them.

The conversation betwixt the Master and his sister, meanwhile, took an interesting, and almost a confidential turn. She could not help mentioning

her sense of the pain he must feel in visiting scenes so well known to him, bearing now an aspect so different; and so gently was her sympathy expressed, that Ravenswood felt it for a moment as a full requital of all his misfortunes. Some such sentiment escaped him, which Lucy heard with more of confusion than displeasure; and she may be forgiven the imprudence of listening to such language, considering that the situation in which she was placed by her father seemed to authorize Ravenswood to use it. Yet she made an effort to turn the conversation, and she succeeded; for the Master also had advanced farther than he intended, and his conscience had instantly checked him when he found himself on the verge of speaking of love to the daughter of Sir William Ashton.

They now approached the hut of old Alice, which had of late been rendered more comfortable, and presented an appearance less picturesque, perhaps, but far neater than before. The old woman was on her accustomed seat beneath the weeping birch, basking, with the listless enjoyment of age and infirmity, in the beams of the autumn sun. At the arrival of her visitors she turned her head towards them. "I hear your step, Miss Ashton," she said, "but the gentleman who attends you is not my lord, your father."

"And why should you think so, Alice?" said Lucy; "or how is it possible for you to judge so accurately by the sound of a step, on this firm earth, and in the open air?"

"My hearing, my child, has been sharpened by my blindness, and I can now draw conclusions from the slightest sounds, which formerly reached my ears as unheeded as they now approach yours. Ne-

cessity is a stern, but an excellent schoolmistress, and she that has lost her sight must collect her information from other sources."

"Well, you hear a man's step, I grant it," said Lucy; "but why, Alice, may it not be my father's?"

"The pace of age, my love, is timid and cautious — the foot takes leave of the earth slowly, and is planted down upon it with hesitation; it is the hasty and determined step of youth that I now hear, and — could I give credit to so strange a thought — I should say it was the step of a Ravenswood."

"This is indeed," said Ravenswood, "an acuteness of organ which I could not have credited had I not witnessed it. — I am indeed the Master of Ravenswood, Alice — the son of your old Master."

"You?" said the old woman, with almost a scream of surprise — "you the Master of Ravenswood — here — in this place, and thus accompanied? — I cannot believe it — Let me pass my old hand over your face, that my touch may bear witness to my ears."

The Master sate down beside her on the earthen bank, and permitted her to touch his features with her trembling hand.

"It is indeed!" she said, "it is the features as well as the voice of Ravenswood — the high lines of pride, as well as the bold and haughty tone. — But what do you here, Master of Ravenswood? — what do you in your enemy's domain, and in company with his child?"

As old Alice spoke, her face kindled, as probably that of an ancient feudal vassal might have done, in whose presence his youthful liege-lord had showed some symptom of degenerating from the spirit of his ancestors.

"The Master of Ravenswood," said Lucy, who liked not the tone of this expostulation, and was desirous to abridge it, "is upon a visit to my father."

"Indeed!" said the old blind woman, in an accent of surprise.

"I knew," continued Lucy, "I should do him a pleasure by conducting him to your cottage."

"Where, to say the truth, Alice," said Ravenswood, "I expected a more cordial reception."

"It is most wonderful!" said the old woman, muttering to herself; "but the ways of Heaven are not like our ways, and its judgments are brought about by means far beyond our fathoming.—Hearken, young man," she said; "your fathers were implacable, but they were honourable foes; they sought not to ruin their enemies under the mask of hospitality. What have you to do with Lucy Ashton?—why should your steps move in the same footpath with hers?—why should your voice sound in the same chord and time with those of Sir William Ashton's daughter?—Young man, he who aims at revenge by dishonourable means"——

"Be silent, woman!" said Ravenswood, sternly; "is it the devil that prompts your voice?—Know that this young lady has not on earth a friend, who would venture farther to save her from injury or from insult."

"And is it even so?" said the old woman, in an altered but melancholy tone—"Then God help you both!"

"Amen! Alice," said Lucy, who had not comprehended the import of what the blind woman had hinted, "and send you your senses, Alice, and your good-humour. If you hold this mysterious

language, instead of welcoming your friends, they will think of you as other people do."

"And how do other people think?" said Ravenswood, for he also began to believe the old woman spoke with incoherence.

"They think," said Henry Ashton, who came up at that moment, and whispered into Ravenswood's ear, "that she is a witch, that should have been burned with them that suffered at Haddington."

"What is that you say?" said Alice, turning towards the boy, her sightless visage inflamed with passion; "that I am a witch, and ought to have suffered with the helpless old wretches who were murdered at Haddington?"

"Hear to that now," again whispered Henry, "and me whispering lower than a wren cheeps!"

"If the usurer, and the oppressor, and the grinder of the poor man's face, and the remover of ancient land-marks, and the subverter of ancient houses, were at the same stake with me, I could say, light the fire, in God's name!"

"This is dreadful," said Lucy; "I have never seen the poor deserted woman in this state of mind; but age and poverty can ill bear reproach. — Come, Henry, we will leave her for the present — she wishes to speak with the Master alone. We will walk homeward, and rest us," she added, looking at Ravenswood, "by the Mermaiden's Well."

"And Alice," said the boy, "if you know of any hare that comes through among the deer, (*q*) and makes them drop their calves out of season, you may tell her, with my compliments to command, that if Norman has not got a silver bullet ready for her, I'll lend him one of my doublet-buttons on purpose."

Alice made no answer till she was aware that the sister and brother were out of hearing. She then said to Ravenswood, "And you, too, are angry with me for my love? — it is just that strangers should be offended, but you, too, are angry!"

"I am not angry, Alice," said the Master, "only surprised that you, whose good sense I have heard so often praised, should give way to offensive and unfounded suspicions."

"Offensive?" said Alice — "Ay, truth is ever offensive — but, surely, not unfounded."

"I tell you, dame, most groundless," replied Ravenswood.

"Then the world has changed its wont, and the Ravenswoods their hereditary temper, and the eyes of Old Alice's understanding are yet more blind than those of her countenance. When did a Ravenswood seek the house of his enemy, but with the purpose of revenge? — and hither are you come, Edgar Ravenswood, either in fatal anger, or in still more fatal love."

"In neither," said Ravenswood, "I give you mine honour — I mean, I assure you."

Alice could not see his blushing cheek, but she noticed his hesitation, and that he retracted the pledge which he seemed at first disposed to attach to his denial.

"It is so, then," she said, "and therefore she is to tarry by the Mermaiden's Well! Often has it been called a place fatal to the race of Ravenswood — often has it proved so — but never was it likely to verify old sayings as much as on this day."

"You drive me to madness, Alice," said Ravenswood; "you are more silly and more superstitious than old Balderstone. Are you such a wretched

Christian as to suppose I would in the present day levy war against the Ashton family, as was the sanguinary custom in elder times? or do you suppose me so foolish, that I cannot walk by a young lady's side without plunging headlong in love with her?"

"My thoughts," replied Alice, "are my own; and if my mortal sight is closed to objects present with me, it may be I can look with more steadiness into future events. Are you prepared to sit lowest at the board which was once your father's own, unwillingly, as a connexion and ally of his proud successor? — Are you ready to live on his bounty — to follow him in the bypaths of intrigue and chicane, which none can better point out to you — to gnaw the bones of his prey when he has devoured the substance? — Can you say as Sir William Ashton says — think as he thinks — vote as he votes, and call your father's murderer your worshipful father-in-law and revered patron? — Master of Ravenswood, I am the eldest servant of your house, and I would rather see you shrouded and coffined!"

The tumult in Ravenswood's mind was uncommonly great; she struck upon and awakened a chord which he had for some time successfully silenced. He strode backwards and forwards through the little garden with a hasty pace; and at length checking himself, and stopping right opposite to Alice, he exclaimed, "Woman! on the verge of the grave, dare you urge the son of your master to blood and to revenge?"

"God forbid!" said Alice solemnly; "and therefore I would have you depart these fatal bounds, where your love, as well as your hatred, threatens sure mischief, or at least disgrace, both to yourself

and others. I would shield, were it in the power of this withered hand, the Ashtons from you, and you from them, and both from their own passions. You can have nothing — ought to have nothing, in common with them — Begone from among them; and if God has destined vengeance on the oppressor's house, do not you be the instrument."

"I will think on what you have said, Alice," said Ravenswood, more composedly. "I believe you mean truly and faithfully by me, but you urge the freedom of an ancient domestic somewhat too far. But farewell; and if Heaven afford me better means, I will not fail to contribute to your comfort."

He attempted to put a piece of gold into her hand, which she refused to receive; and, in the slight struggle attending his wish to force it upon her, it dropped to the earth.

"Let it remain an instant on the ground," said Alice, as the Master stooped to raise it; "and believe me, that piece of gold is an emblem of her whom you love; she is as precious, I grant, but you must stoop even to abasement before you can win her. For me, I have as little to do with gold as with earthly passions; and the best news that the world has in store for me is, that Edgar Ravenswood is an hundred miles distant from the seat of his ancestors, with the determination never again to behold it."

"Alice," said the Master, who began to think this earnestness had some more secret cause than arose from any thing that the blind woman could have gathered from this casual visit, "I have heard you praised by my mother for your sense, acuteness, and fidelity; you are no fool to start at shadows, or to dread old superstitious saws, like Caleb

Balderstone; tell me distinctly where my danger lies, if you are aware of any which is tending towards me. If I know myself, I am free from all such views respecting Miss Ashton as you impute to me. I have necessary business to settle with Sir William — that arranged, I shall depart; and with as little wish, as you may easily believe, to return to a place full of melancholy subjects of reflection, as you have to see me here."

Alice bent her sightless eyes on the ground, and was for some time plunged in deep meditation. "I will speak the truth," she said at length, raising up her head — "I will tell you the source of my apprehensions, whether my candour be for good or for evil. — Lucy Ashton loves you, Lord of Ravenswood!"

"It is impossible," said the Master.

"A thousand circumstances have proved it to me," replied the blind woman. "Her thoughts have turned on no one else since you saved her from death, and that my experienced judgment has won from her own conversation. Having told you this — if you are indeed a gentleman and your father's son — you will make it a motive for flying from her presence. Her passion will die like a lamp, for want of that the flame should feed upon; but, if you remain here, her destruction, or yours, or that of both, will be the inevitable consequence of her misplaced attachment. I tell you this secret unwillingly, but it could not have been hid long from your own observation; and it is better you learn it from mine. Depart, Master of Ravenswood — you have my secret. If you remain an hour under Sir William Ashton's roof without the resolution to marry his daughter, you are a villain —

if with the purpose of allying yourself with him, you are an infatuated and predestined fool."

So saying, the old blind woman arose, assumed her staff, and, tottering to her hut, entered it and closed the door, leaving Ravenswood to his own reflections.

CHAPTER XX.

> Lovelier in her own retired abode
> —— than Naiad by the side
> Of Grecian brook — or Lady of the Mere
> Lone sitting by the shores of old romance.
>
> WORDSWORTH.

THE meditations of Ravenswood were of a very mixed complexion. He saw himself at once in the very dilemma which he had for some time felt apprehensive he might be placed in. The pleasure he felt in Lucy's company had indeed approached to fascination, yet it had never altogether surmounted his internal reluctance to wed with the daughter of his father's foe; and even in forgiving Sir William Ashton the injuries which his family had received, and giving him credit for the kind intentions he professed to entertain, he could not bring himself to contemplate as possible an alliance betwixt their houses. Still he felt that Alice spoke truth, and that his honour now required he should take an instant leave of Ravenswood Castle, or become a suitor of Lucy Ashton. The possibility of being rejected, too, should he make advances to her wealthy and powerful father — to sue for the hand of an Ashton and be refused — this were a consummation too disgraceful. "I wish her well," he said to himself, "and for her sake I forgive the injuries her father has done to my house; but I will never — no, never see her more!"

With one bitter pang he adopted this resolution, just as he came to where two paths parted; the one to the Mermaiden's Fountain, where he knew Lucy waited him, the other leading to the castle by another and more circuitous road. He paused an instant when about to take the latter path, thinking what apology he should make for conduct which must needs seem extraordinary, and had just muttered to himself, "Sudden news from Edinburgh — any pretext will serve — only let me dally no longer here," when young Henry came flying up to him, half out of breath — "Master, Master, you must give Lucy your arm back to the castle, for I cannot give her mine; for Norman is waiting for me, and I am to go with him to make his ring-walk, and I would not stay away for a gold Jacobus, and Lucy is afraid to walk home alone, though all the wild nowt have been shot, and so you must come away directly."

Betwixt two scales equally loaded, a feather's weight will turn the scale. "It is impossible for me to leave the young lady in the wood alone," said Ravenswood; "to see her once more can be of little consequence, after the frequent meetings we have had — I ought, too, in courtesy, to apprise her of my intention to quit the castle."

And having thus satisfied himself that he was taking not only a wise, but an absolutely necessary step, he took the path to the fatal fountain. Henry no sooner saw him on the way to join his sister, than he was off like lightning in another direction, to enjoy the society of the forester in their congenial pursuits. Ravenswood, not allowing himself to give a second thought to the propriety of his own conduct, walked with a quick step towards the

stream, where he found Lucy seated alone by the ruin.

She sate upon one of the disjointed stones of the ancient fountain, and seemed to watch the progress of its current, as it bubbled forth to daylight, in gay and sparkling profusion, from under the shadow of the ribbed and darksome vault, with which veneration, or perhaps remorse, had canopied its source. To a superstitious eye, Lucy Ashton, folded in her plaided mantle, with her long hair, escaping partly from the snood and falling upon her silver neck, might have suggested the idea of the murdered Nymph of the Fountain. But Ravenswood only saw a female exquisitely beautiful, and rendered yet more so in his eyes — how could it be otherwise — by the consciousness that she had placed her affections on him. As he gazed on her, he felt his fixed resolution melting like wax in the sun, and hastened, therefore, from his concealment in the neighbouring thicket. She saluted him, but did not arise from the stone on which she was seated.

"My mad-cap brother," she said, "has left me, but I expect him back in a few minutes — for fortunately, as any thing pleases him for a minute, nothing has charms for him much longer."

Ravenswood did not feel the power of informing Lucy that her brother meditated a distant excursion, and would not return in haste. He sate himself down on the grass, at some little distance from Miss Ashton, and both were silent for a short space.

"I like this spot," said Lucy at length, as if she had found the silence embarrassing; "the bubbling murmur of the clear fountain, the waving of the trees, the profusion of grass and wild-flowers, that

rise among the ruins, make it like a scene in romance. I think, too, I have heard it is a spot connected with the legendary lore which I love so well."

"It has been thought," answered Ravenswood, "a fatal spot to my family; and I have some reason to term it so, for it was here I first saw Miss Ashton — and it is here I must take my leave of her for ever."

The blood, which the first part of this speech called into Lucy's cheeks, was speedily expelled by its conclusion.

"To take leave of us, Master!" she exclaimed; "what can have happened to hurry you away? — I know Alice hates — I mean dislikes my father — and I hardly understood her humour to-day, it was so mysterious. But I am certain my father is sincerely grateful for the high service you rendered us. Let me hope that having won your friendship hardly, we shall not lose it lightly."

"Lose it, Miss Ashton?" said the Master of Ravenswood, — "No — wherever my fortune calls me — whatever she inflicts upon me — it is your friend — your sincere friend, who acts or suffers. But there is a fate on me, and I must go, or I shall add the ruin of others to my own."

"Yet do not go from us, Master," said Lucy; and she laid her hand, in all simplicity and kindness, upon the skirt of his cloak, as if to detain him — "You shall not part from us. My father is powerful, he has friends that are more so than himself — do not go till you see what his gratitude will do for you Believe me, he is already labouring in your behalf with the Council."

"It may be so," said the Master, proudly; "yet

it is not to your father, Miss Ashton, but to my own exertions, that I ought to owe success in the career on which I am about to enter. My preparations are already made — a sword and a cloak, and a bold heart and a determined hand."

Lucy covered her face with her hands, and the tears, in spite of her, forced their way between her fingers. "Forgive me," said Ravenswood, taking her right hand, which, after slight resistance, she yielded to him, still continuing to shade her face with the left — "I am too rude — too rough — too intractable to deal with any being so soft and gentle as you are. Forget that so stern a vision has crossed your path of life — and let me pursue mine, sure that I can meet with no worse misfortune after the moment it divides me from your side."

Lucy wept on, but her tears were less bitter. Each attempt which the Master made to explain his purpose of departure, only proved a new evidence of his desire to stay; until, at length, instead of bidding her farewell, he gave his faith to her for ever, and received her troth in return. The whole passed so suddenly, and arose so much out of the immediate impulse of the moment, that ere the Master of Ravenswood could reflect upon the consequences of the step which he had taken, their lips, as well as their hands, had pledged the sincerity of their affection.

"And now," he said, after a moment's consideration, "it is fit I should speak to Sir William Ashton — he must know of our engagement. Ravenswood must not seem to dwell under his roof, to solicit clandestinely the affections of his daughter."

"You would not speak to my father on the subject?" said Lucy, doubtingly; and then added more

warmly, "O do not — do not! Let your lot in life be determined — your station and purpose ascertained, before you address my father; I am sure he loves you — I think he will consent — but then my mother!"——

She paused, ashamed to express the doubt she felt how far her father dared to form any positive resolution on this most important subject, without the consent of his lady.

"Your mother, my Lucy?" replied Ravenswood, "she is of the house of Douglas, a house that has intermarried with mine, even when its glory and power were at the highest — what could your mother object to my alliance?"

"I did not say object," said Lucy; "but she is jealous of her rights, and may claim a mother's title to be consulted in the first instance."

"Be it so," replied Ravenswood; "London is distant, but a letter will reach it and receive an answer within a fortnight — I will not press on the Lord Keeper for an instant reply to my proposal."

"But," hesitated Lucy, "were it not better to wait — to wait a few weeks? — Were my mother to see you — to know you — I am sure she would approve; but you are unacquainted personally, and the ancient feud between the families"——

Ravenswood fixed upon her his keen dark eyes, as if he was desirous of penetrating into her very soul.

"Lucy," he said, "I have sacrificed to you projects of vengeance long nursed, and sworn to with ceremonies little better than heathen — I sacrificed them to your image, ere I knew the worth which it represented. In the evening which succeeded my poor father's funeral, I cut a lock from my hair,

and, as it consumed in the fire, I swore that my rage and revenge should pursue his enemies, until they shrivelled before me like that scorched-up symbol of annihilation."

"It was a deadly sin," said Lucy, turning pale, "to make a vow so fatal."

"I acknowledge it," said Ravenswood, "and it had been a worse crime to keep it. It was for your sake that I abjured these purposes of vengeance, though I scarce knew that such was the argument by which I was conquered, until I saw you once more, and became conscious of the influence you possessed over me."

"And why do you now," said Lucy, "recall sentiments so terrible — sentiments so inconsistent with those you profess for me — with those your importunity has prevailed on me to acknowledge?"

"Because," said her lover, "I would impress on you the price at which I have bought your love — the right I have to expect your constancy. I say not that I have bartered for it the honour of my house, its last remaining possession — but though I say it not, and think it not, I cannot conceal from myself that the world may do both."

"If such are your sentiments," said Lucy, "you have played a cruel game with me. But it is not too late to give it over — take back the faith and troth which you could not plight to me without suffering abatement of honour — let what is passed be as if it had not been — forget me — I will endeavour to forget myself."

"You do me injustice," said the Master of Ravenswood; "by all I hold true and honourable, you do me the extremity of injustice — if I mentioned the price at which I have bought your love, it is only to

show how much I prize it, to bind our engagement by a still firmer tie, and to show, by what I have done to attain this station in your regard, how much I must suffer should you ever break your faith."

"And why, Ravenswood," answered Lucy, "should you think that possible?—Why should you urge me with even the mention of infidelity?—Is it because I ask you to delay applying to my father for a little space of time? Bind me by what vows you please; if vows are unnecessary to secure constancy, they may yet prevent suspicion."

Ravenswood pleaded, apologized, and even kneeled, to appease her displeasure; and Lucy, as placable as she was single-hearted, readily forgave the offence which his doubts had implied. The dispute thus agitated, however, ended by the lovers going through an emblematic ceremony of their troth-plight, of which the vulgar still preserve some traces. They broke betwixt them the thin broad-piece of gold which Alice had refused to receive from Ravenswood.

"And never shall this leave my bosom," said Lucy, as she hung the piece of gold round her neck, and concealed it with her handkerchief, "until you, Edgar Ravenswood, ask me to resign it to you—and, while I wear it, never shall that heart acknowledge another love than yours."

With like protestations, Ravenswood placed his portion of the coin opposite to his heart. And now, at length, it struck them, that time had hurried fast on during this interview, and their absence at the castle would be subject of remark, if not of alarm. As they arose to leave the fountain which had been witness of their mutual engagement, an arrow whistled through the air, and struck a raven

perched on the sere branch of an old oak, near to where they had been seated. The bird fluttered a few yards, and dropped at the feet of Lucy, whose dress was stained with some spots of its blood.

Miss Ashton was much alarmed, and Ravenswood, surprised and angry, looked everywhere for the marksman, who had given them a proof of his skill as little expected as desired. He was not long of discovering himself, being no other than Henry Ashton, who came running up with a cross-bow in his hand.

"I knew I should startle you," he said; "and do you know you looked so busy that I hoped it would have fallen souse on your heads before you were aware of it. — What was the Master saying to you, Lucy?"

"I was telling your sister what an idle lad you were, keeping us waiting here for you so long," said Ravenswood, to save Lucy's confusion.

"Waiting for me? Why, I told you to see Lucy home, and that I was to go to make the ring-walk with old Norman in the Hayberry thicket, and you may be sure that would take a good hour, and we have all the deer's marks and furnishes got, while you were sitting here with Lucy, like a lazy loon."

"Well, well, Mr. Henry," said Ravenswood; "but let us see how you will answer to me for killing the raven. Do you know the ravens are all under the protection of the Lords of Ravenswood, and, to kill one in their presence, is such bad luck that it deserves the stab?"

"And that's what Norman said," replied the boy; "he came as far with me, as within a flight-shot of you, and he said he never saw a raven sit still so near living folk, and he wished it might be for good

luck; for the raven is one of the wildest birds that flies, unless it be a tame one — and so I crept on and on, till I was within three score yards of him, and then whiz went the bolt, and there he lies, faith! Was it not well shot? — and, I daresay, I have not shot in a crossbow — not ten times, maybe."

"Admirably shot indeed," said Ravenswood; "and you will be a fine marksman if you practise hard."

"And that's what Norman says," answered the boy; "but I am sure it is not my fault if I do not practise enough; for, of free will, I would do little else, only my father and tutor are angry sometimes, and only Miss Lucy there gives herself airs about my being busy, for all she can sit idle by a well-side the whole day, when she has a handsome young gentleman to prate with — I have known her do so twenty times, if you will believe me."

The boy looked at his sister as he spoke, and, in the midst of his mischievous chatter, had the sense to see that he was really inflicting pain upon her, though without being able to comprehend the cause or the amount.

"Come now, Lucy," he said, "don't greet; and if I have said any thing beside the mark, I'll deny it again — and what does the Master of Ravenswood care if you had a hundred sweethearts? — so ne'er put finger in your eye about it."

The Master of Ravenswood was, for the moment, scarce satisfied with what he heard; yet his good sense naturally regarded it as the chatter of a spoilt boy, who strove to mortify his sister in the point which seemed most accessible for the time. But, although of a temper equally slow in receiving im-

pressions, and obstinate in retaining them, the prattle of Henry served to nourish in his mind some vague suspicion, that his present engagement might only end in his being exposed like a conquered enemy in a Roman triumph, a captive attendant on the car of a victor, who meditated only the satiating his pride at the expense of the vanquished. There was, we repeat it, no real ground whatever for such an apprehension, nor could he be said seriously to entertain such for a moment. Indeed, it was impossible to look at the clear blue eye of Lucy Ashton, and entertain the slightest permanent doubt concerning the sincerity of her disposition. Still, however, conscious pride and conscious poverty combined to render a mind suspicious, which, in more fortunate circumstances, would have been a stranger to that as well as to every other meanness.

They reached the castle, where Sir William Ashton, who had been alarmed by the length of their stay, met them in the hall.

"Had Lucy," he said, "been in any other company than that of one who had shown he had so complete power of protecting her, he confessed he should have been very uneasy, and would have dispatched persons in quest of them. But, in the company of the Master of Ravenswood, he knew his daughter had nothing to dread."

Lucy commenced some apology for their long delay, but, conscience struck, became confused as she proceeded; and when Ravenswood, coming to her assistance, endeavoured to render the explanation complete and satisfactory, he only involved himself in the same disorder, like one who, endeavouring to extricate his companion from a slough,

entangles himself in the same tenacious swamp. It cannot be supposed that the confusion of the two youthful lovers escaped the observation of the subtle lawyer, accustomed, by habit and profession, to trace human nature through all her windings. But it was not his present policy to take any notice of what he observed. He desired to hold the Master of Ravenswood bound, but wished that he himself should remain free; and it did not occur to him that his plan might be defeated by Lucy's returning the passion which he hoped she might inspire. If she should adopt some romantic feelings towards Ravenswood, in which circumstances, or the positive and absolute opposition of Lady Ashton, might render it unadvisable to indulge her, the Lord Keeper conceived they might be easily superseded and annulled by a journey to Edinburgh, or even to London, a new set of Brussels lace, and the soft whispers of half a dozen lovers, anxious to replace him whom it was convenient she should renounce. This was his provision for the worst view of the case. But, according to its more probable issue, any passing favour she might entertain for the Master of Ravenswood, might require encouragement rather than repression.

This seemed the more likely, as he had that very morning, since their departure from the castle, received a letter, the contents of which he hastened to communicate to Ravenswood. A foot-post had arrived with a packet to the Lord Keeper from that friend whom we have already mentioned, who was labouring hard under-hand to consolidate a band of patriots, at the head of whom stood Sir William's greatest terror, the active and ambitious Marquis of A——. The success of this convenient friend

had been such, that he had obtained from Sir William, not indeed a directly favourable answer, but certainly a most patient hearing. This he had reported to his principal, who had replied, by the ancient French adage, "*Château qui parle, et femme qui écoute, l'un et l'autre va se rendre.*" A statesman who hears you propose a change of measures without reply, was, according to the Marquis's opinion, in the situation of the fortress which parleys, and the lady who listens, and he resolved to press the siege of the Lord Keeper.

The packet, therefore, contained a letter from his friend and ally, and another from himself to the Lord Keeper, frankly offering an unceremonious visit. They were crossing the country to go to the southward — the roads were indifferent — the accommodation of the inns as execrable as possible — the Lord Keeper had been long acquainted intimately with one of his correspondents, and though more slightly known to the Marquis, had yet enough of his lordship's acquaintance to render the visit sufficiently natural, and to shut the mouths of those who might be disposed to impute it to a political intrigue. He instantly accepted the offered visit, determined, however, that he would not pledge himself an inch farther for the furtherance of their views than *reason* (by which he meant his own self-interest) should plainly point out to him as proper.

Two circumstances particularly delighted him; the presence of Ravenswood, and the absence of his own lady. By having the former under his roof, he conceived he might be able to quash all such hazardous and hostile proceedings as he might otherwise have been engaged in, under the patron-

age of the Marquis; and Lucy, he foresaw, would make, for his immediate purpose of delay and procrastination, a much better mistress of his family than her mother, who would, he was sure, in some shape or other, contrive to disconcert his political schemes by her proud and implacable temper.

His anxious solicitations that the Master would stay to receive his kinsman, were of course readily complied with, since the *éclaircissement* which had taken place at the Mermaiden's Fountain had removed all wish for sudden departure. Lucy and Lockhard had, therefore, orders to provide all things necessary in their different departments, for receiving the expected guests, with a pomp and display of luxury very uncommon in Scotland at that remote period.

CHAPTER XXI.

Marall. Sir, the man of honour's come,
Newly alighted ———
Overreach. In without reply,
And do as I command. ——
Is the loud music I gave order for
Ready to receive him? ——

New Way to Pay Old Debts.

SIR WILLIAM ASHTON, although a man of sense, legal information, and great practical knowledge of the world, had yet some points of character which corresponded better with the timidity of his disposition and the supple arts by which he had risen in the world, than to the degree of eminence which he had attained; as they tended to show an original mediocrity of understanding, however highly it had been cultivated, and a native meanness of disposition, however carefully veiled. He loved the ostentatious display of his wealth, less as a man to whom habit has made it necessary, than as one to whom it is still delightful from its novelty. The most trivial details did not escape him; and Lucy soon learned to watch the flush of scorn which crossed Ravenswood's cheek, when he heard her father gravely arguing with Lockhard, nay, even with the old housekeeper, upon circumstances which, in families of rank, are left uncared for, because it is supposed impossible they can be neglected.

"I could pardon Sir William," said Ravenswood, one evening after he had left the room, "some general anxiety upon this occasion, for the Marquis's visit is an honour, and should be received as such; but I am worn out by these miserable minutiæ of the buttery, and the larder, and the very hen-coop — they drive me beyond my patience; I would rather endure the poverty of Wolf's Crag, than be pestered with the wealth of Ravenswood Castle."

"And yet," said Lucy, "it was by attention to these minutiæ that my father acquired the property" ——

"Which my ancestors sold for lack of it," replied Ravenswood. "Be it so; a porter still bears but a burden, though the burden be of gold."

Lucy sighed; she perceived too plainly that her lover held in scorn the manners and habits of a father, to whom she had long looked up as her best and most partial friend, whose fondness had often consoled her for her mother's contemptuous harshness.

The lovers soon discovered that they differed upon other and no less important topics. Religion, the mother of peace, was, in those days of discord, so much misconstrued and mistaken, that her rules and forms were the subject of the most opposite opinions, and the most hostile animosities. The Lord Keeper, being a whig, was, of course, a Presbyterian, and had found it convenient, at different periods, to express greater zeal for the kirk, than perhaps he really felt. His family, equally of course, were trained under the same institution. Ravenswood, as we know, was a High-Church man, or Episcopalian, and frequently objected to Lucy

the fanaticism of some of her own communion, while she intimated, rather than expressed, horror at the latitudinarian principles which she had been taught to think connected with the prelatical form of church-government.

Thus, although their mutual affection seemed to increase rather than to be diminished, as their characters opened more fully on each other, the feelings of each were mingled with some less agreeable ingredients. Lucy felt a secret awe, amid all her affection for Ravenswood. His soul was of an higher, prouder character, than those with whom she had hitherto mixed in intercourse; his ideas were more fierce and free; and he contemned many of the opinions which had been inculcated upon her, as chiefly demanding her veneration. On the other hand, Ravenswood saw in Lucy a soft and flexible character, which, in his eyes at least, seemed too susceptible of being moulded to any form by those with whom she lived. He felt that his own temper required a partner of a more independent spirit, who could set sail with him on his course of life, resolved as himself to dare indifferently the storm and the favouring breeze. But Lucy was so beautiful, so devoutly attached to him, of a temper so exquisitely soft and kind, that, while he could have wished it were possible to inspire her with a greater degree of firmness and resolution, and while he sometimes became impatient of the extreme fear which she expressed of their attachment being prematurely discovered, he felt that the softness of a mind, amounting almost to feebleness, rendered her even dearer to him, as a being who had voluntarily clung to him for protection, and made him the arbiter of her fate for weal or woe. His feelings

towards her at such moments, were those which have been since so beautifully expressed by our immortal Joanna Baillie:

> ——— "Thou sweetest thing,
> That e'er did fix its lightly-fibred sprays
> To the rude rock, ah! wouldst thou cling to me?
> Rough and storm-worn I am — yet love me as
> Thou truly dost, I will love thee again
> With true and honest heart, though all unmeet
> To be the mate of such sweet gentleness."

Thus the very points in which they differed, seemed, in some measure, to ensure the continuance of their mutual affection. If, indeed, they had so fully appreciated each other's character before the burst of passion in which they hastily pledged their faith to each other, Lucy might have feared Ravenswood too much ever to have loved him, and he might have construed her softness and docile temper as imbecility, rendering her unworthy of his regard. But they stood pledged to each other; and Lucy only feared that her lover's pride might one day teach him to regret his attachment; Ravenswood, that a mind so ductile as Lucy's might, in absence or difficulties, be induced, by the entreaties or influence of those around her, to renounce the engagement she had formed.

"Do not fear it," said Lucy, when upon one occasion a hint of such suspicion escaped her lover; "the mirrors which receive the reflection of all successive objects are framed of hard materials like glass or steel — the softer substances, when they receive an impression, retain it undefaced."

"This is poetry, Lucy," said Ravenswood; "and in poetry there is always fallacy, and sometimes fiction."

"Believe me then, once more, in honest prose," said Lucy, "that, though I will never wed man without the consent of my parents, yet neither force nor persuasion shall dispose of my hand till you renounce the right I have given you to it."

The lovers had ample time for such explanations. Henry was now more seldom their companion, being either a most unwilling attendant upon the lessons of his tutor, or a forward volunteer under the instructions of the foresters or grooms. As for the Keeper, his mornings were spent in his study, maintaining correspondences of all kinds, and balancing in his anxious mind the various intelligence which he collected from every quarter concerning the expected change of Scottish politics, and the probable strength of the parties who were about to struggle for power. At other times he busied himself about arranging, and countermanding, and then again arranging, the preparations which he judged necessary for the reception of the Marquis of A——, whose arrival had been twice delayed by some necessary cause of detention.

In the midst of all these various avocations, political and domestic, he seemed not to observe how much his daughter and his guest were thrown into each other's society, and was censured by many of his neighbours, according to the fashion of neighbours in all countries, for suffering such an intimate connexion to take place betwixt two young persons. The only natural explanation was, that he designed them for each other; while, in truth, his only motive was to temporize and procrastinate, until he should discover the real extent of the interest which the Marquis took in Ravenswood's affairs, and the power which he was likely to possess of advancing

them. Until these points should be made both clear and manifest, the Lord Keeper resolved that he would do nothing to commit himself, either in one shape or other; and, like many cunning persons, he overreached himself deplorably.

Amongst those who had been disposed to censure, with the greatest severity, the conduct of Sir William Ashton, in permitting the prolonged residence of Ravenswood under his roof, and his constant attendance on Miss Ashton, was the new Laird of Girnington, and his faithful squire and bottle-holder, personages formerly well known to us by the names of Hayston and Bucklaw, and his companion Captain Craigengelt. The former had at length succeeded to the extensive property of his long-lived grand-aunt, and to considerable wealth besides, which he had employed in redeeming his paternal acres, (by the title appertaining to which he still chose to be designated,) notwithstanding Captain Craigengelt had proposed to him a most advantageous mode of vesting the money in Law's scheme, which was just then broached, and offered his services to travel express to Paris for the purpose. But Bucklaw had so far derived wisdom from adversity, that he would listen to no proposal which Craigengelt could invent, which had the slightest tendency to risk his newly-acquired independence. He that had once eat pease-bannocks, drank sour wine, and slept in the secret chamber at Wolf's Crag, would, he said, prize good cheer and a soft bed as long as he lived, and take special care never to need such hospitality again.

Craigengelt, therefore, found himself disappointed in the first hopes he had entertained of making a good hand of the Laird of Bucklaw. Still, how-

ever, he reaped many advantages from his friend's good fortune. Bucklaw, who had never been at all scrupulous in choosing his companions, was accustomed to, and entertained by a fellow, whom he could either laugh with, or laugh at, as he had a mind, who would take, according to Scottish phrase, "the bit and the buffet," understood all sports, whether within or without doors, and, when the laird had a mind for a bottle of wine, (no infrequent circumstance,) was always ready to save him from the scandal of getting drunk by himself. Upon these terms Craigengelt was the frequent, almost the constant, inmate of the house of Girnington.

In no time, and under no possibility of circumstances, could good have been derived from such an intimacy, however its bad consequences might be qualified by the thorough knowledge which Bucklaw possessed of his dependant's character, and the high contempt in which he held it. But as circumstances stood, this evil communication was particularly liable to corrupt what good principles nature had implanted in the patron.

Craigengelt had never forgiven the scorn with which Ravenswood had torn the mask of courage and honesty from his countenance; and to exasperate Bucklaw's resentment against him, was the safest mode of revenge which occurred to his cowardly, yet cunning and malignant disposition.

He brought up, on all occasions, the story of the challenge which Ravenswood had declined to accept, and endeavoured, by every possible insinuation, to make his patron believe that his honour was concerned in bringing that matter to an issue by a present discussion with Ravenswood. But

respecting this subject, Bucklaw imposed on him, at length, a peremptory command of silence.

"I think," he said, "the Master has treated me unlike a gentleman, and I see no right he had to send me back a cavalier answer when I demanded the satisfaction of one—But he gave me my life once—and, in looking the matter over at present, I put myself but on equal terms with him. Should he cross me again, I shall consider the old accompt as balanced, and his Mastership will do well to look to himself."

"That he should," re-echoed Craigengelt; "for when you are in practice, Bucklaw, I would bet a magnum you are through him before the third pass."

"Then you know nothing of the matter," said Bucklaw, "and you never saw him fence."

"And I know nothing of the matter?" said the dependant—"a good jest, I promise you!—and though I never saw Ravenswood fence, have I not been at Monsieur Sagoon's school, who was the first *maître d'armes* at Paris; and have I not been at Signor Poco's at Florence, and Meinheer Durchstossen's at Vienna, and have I not seen all their play?"

"I don't know whether you have or not," said Bucklaw; "but what about it, though you had?"

"Only that I will be d—d if ever I saw French, Italian, or High-Dutchman ever make foot, hand, and eye, keep time half so well as you, Bucklaw."

"I believe you lie, Craigie," said Bucklaw; "however, I can hold my own, both with single rapier, backsword, sword and dagger, broadsword, or case of falchions—and that's as much as any gentleman need know of the matter."

"And the double of what ninety-nine out of a hundred know," said Craigengelt; "they learn to change a few thrusts with the small sword, and then, forsooth, they understand the noble art of defence! Now, when I was at Rouen in the year 1695, there was a Chevalier de Chapon and I went to the Opera, where we found three bits of English birkies"——

"Is it a long story you are going to tell?" said Bucklaw, interrupting him without ceremony.

"Just as you like," answered the parasite, "for we made short work of it."

"Then I like it short," said Bucklaw; "is it serious, or merry?"

"Devilish serious, I assure you, and so they found it; for the Chevalier and I"——

"Then I don't like it at all," said Bucklaw; "so fill a brimmer of my auld auntie's claret, rest her heart! And, as the Hielandman says, *Skioch doch na skiaill.*"[1]

"That was what tough old Sir Evan Dhu used to say to me when I was out with the metall'd lads in 1689. 'Craigengelt,' he used to say, 'you are as pretty a fellow as ever held steel in his grip, but you have one fault.'"

"If he had known you as long as I have done," said Bucklaw, "he would have found out some twenty more; but hang long stories, give us your toast, man."

Craigengelt rose, went a tiptoe to the door, peeped out, shut it carefully, came back again — clapped his tarnished gold-laced hat on one side of his head, took his glass in one hand, and touching the hilt of

[1] "Cut a drink with a tale;" equivalent to the English adage of boon companions, "don't preach over your liquor."

his hanger with the other, named, "The King over the water."

"I tell you what it is, Captain Craigengelt," said Bucklaw; "I shall keep my mind to myself on these subjects, having too much respect for the memory of my venerable aunt Girnington to put her lands and tenements in the way of committing treason against established authority. Bring me King James to Edinburgh, Captain, with thirty thousand men at his back, and I'll tell you what I think about his title; but as for running my neck into a noose, and my good broad lands into the statutory penalties, 'in that case made and provided,' rely upon it, you will find me no such fool. So, when you mean to vapour with your hanger and your dram-cup in support of treasonable toasts, you must find your liquor and company elsewhere."

"Well, then," said Craigengelt, "name the toast yourself, and be it what it like, I'll pledge you, were it a mile to the bottom."

"And I'll give you a toast that deserves it, my boy," said Bucklaw; "what say you to Miss Lucy Ashton?"

"Up with it," said the Captain, as he tossed off his brimmer, "the bonniest lass in Lothian. What a pity the old sneck-drawing whigamore, her father, is about to throw her away upon that rag of pride and beggary, the Master of Ravenswood!"

"That's not quite so clear," said Bucklaw, in a tone, which, though it seemed indifferent, excited his companion's eager curiosity; and not that only, but also his hope of working himself into some sort of confidence, which might make him necessary to his patron, being by no means satisfied to rest on mere sufferance, if he could form by art or industry a more permanent title to his favour.

"I thought," said he, after a moment's pause, "that was a settled matter — they are continually together, and nothing else is spoken of betwixt Lammerlaw and Traprain."

"They may say what they please," replied his patron, "but I know better; and I'll give you Miss Lucy Ashton's health again, my boy."

"And I would drink it on my knee," said Craigengelt, "if I thought the girl had the spirit to jilt that d—d son of a Spaniard."

"I am to request you will not use the word jilt and Miss Ashton's name together," said Bucklaw, gravely.

"Jilt, did I say? — discard, my lad of acres — by Jove, I meant to say discard," replied Craigengelt; "and I hope she'll discard him like a small card at piquet, and take in the King of Hearts, my boy! — But yet" ——

"But what?" said his patron.

"But yet I know for certain they are hours together alone, and in the woods and the fields."

"That's her foolish father's dotage — that will be soon put out of the lass's head, if it ever gets into it," answered Bucklaw. "And now fill your glass again, Captain, I am going to make you happy — I am going to let you into a secret — a plot — a noosing plot — only the noose is but typical."

"A marrying matter?" said Craigengelt, and his jaw fell as he asked the question; for he suspected that matrimony would render his situation at Girnington much more precarious than during the jolly days of his patron's bachelorhood.

"Ay, a marriage, man," said Bucklaw; "but wherefore droops thy mighty spirit, and why grow the rubies on thy cheek so pale? The board will

have a corner, and the corner will have a trencher, and the trencher will have a glass beside it; and the board-end shall be filled, and the trencher and the glass shall be replenished for thee, if all the petticoats in Lothian had sworn the contrary — What, man! I am not the boy to put myself into leading strings?"

"So says many an honest fellow," said Craigengelt, "and some of my special friends; but, curse me if I know the reason, the women could never bear me, and always contrived to trundle me out of favour before the honeymoon was over."

"If you could have kept your ground till that was over, you might have made a good year's pension," said Bucklaw.

"But I never could," answered the dejected parasite; "there was my Lord Castle-Cuddy — we were hand and glove — I rode his horses — borrowed money, both for him and from him — trained his hawks, and taught him how to lay his bets; and when he took a fancy of marrying, I married him to Katie Glegg, whom I thought myself as sure of as man could be of woman. Egad, she had me out of the house, as if I had run on wheels, within the first fortnight!"

"Well!" replied Bucklaw, "I think I have nothing of Castle-Cuddy about me, or Lucy of Katie Glegg. But you see the thing will go on whether you like it or no — the only question is, will you be useful?"

"Useful?" exclaimed the Captain; — "and to thee, my lad of lands, my darling boy, whom I would tramp barefooted through the world for? — name time, place, mode, and circumstances, and see if I will not be useful in all uses that can be devised."

"Why, then, you must ride two hundred miles for me," said the patron.

"A thousand, and call them a flea's leap," answered the dependant; "I'll cause saddle my horse directly."

"Better stay till you know where you are to go, and what you are to do," quoth Bucklaw. "You know I have a kinswoman in Northumberland, Lady Blenkensop by name, whose old acquaintance I had the misfortune to lose in the period of my poverty, but the light of whose countenance shone forth upon me when the sun of my prosperity began to arise."

"D—n all such double-faced jades!" exclaimed Craigengelt, heroically; "this I will say for John Craigengelt, that he is his friend's friend through good report and bad report, poverty and riches; and you know something of that yourself, Bucklaw."

"I have not forgot your merits," said his patron; "I do remember, that, in my extremities, you had a mind to *crimp* me for the service of the French king, or of the Pretender; and, moreover, that you afterwards lent me a score of pieces, when, as I firmly believe, you had heard the news that old Lady Girnington had a touch of the dead palsy. But don't be downcast, John; I believe, after all, you like me very well in your way, and it is my misfortune to have no better counsellor at present. To return to this Lady Blenkensop, you must know she is a close confederate of Duchess Sarah."

"What! of Sall Jennings?" exclaimed Craigengelt; "then she must be a good one."

"Hold your tongue, and keep your Tory rants to yourself, if it be possible," said Bucklaw; "I tell you,

that through the Duchess of Marlborough has this Northumbrian cousin of mine become a crony of Lady Ashton, the Keeper's wife, or, I may say, the Lord Keeper's Lady Keeper, and she has favoured Lady Blenkensop with a visit on her return from London, and is just now at her old mansion-house on the banks of the Wansbeck. Now, sir, as it has been the use and wont of these ladies to consider their husbands as of no importance in the management of their own families, it has been their present pleasure, without consulting Sir William Ashton, to put on the *tapis* a matrimonial alliance, to be concluded between Lucy Ashton and my own right honourable self, Lady Ashton acting a self-constituted plenipotentiary on the part of her daughter and husband, and Mother Blenkensop, equally unaccredited, doing me the honour to be my representative. You may suppose I was a little astonished when I found that a treaty, in which I was so considerably interested, had advanced a good way before I was even consulted."

"Capot me if I think that was according to the rules of the game," said his confident; "and pray, what answer did you return?"

"Why, my first thought was to send the treaty to the devil, and the negotiators along with it, for a couple of meddling old women; my next was to laugh very heartily; and my third and last was a settled opinion that the thing was reasonable, and would suit me well enough."

"Why, I thought you had never seen the wench but once — and then she had her riding-mask on — I am sure you told me so."

"Ay — but I liked her very well then. And Ravenswood's dirty usage of me — shutting me out

of doors to dine with the lackeys, because he had the Lord Keeper, forsooth, and his daughter, to be guests in his beggarly castle of starvation — D—n me, Craigengelt, if I ever forgive him till I play him as good a trick!"

"No more you should, if you are a lad of mettle," said Craigengelt, the matter now taking a turn in which he could sympathize; "and if you carry this wench from him, it will break his heart."

"That it will not," said Bucklaw; "his heart is all steeled over with reason and philosophy — things that you, Craigie, know nothing about more than myself, God help me — But it will break his pride, though, and that's what I'm driving at."

"Distance me," said Craigengelt, "but I know the reason now of his unmannerly behaviour at his old tumble-down tower yonder — Ashamed of your company? — no, no! — Gad, he was afraid you would cut in and carry off the girl."

"Eh! Craigengelt?" said Bucklaw — "do you really think so? — but no, no! — he is a devilish deal prettier man than I am."

"Who — he?" exclaimed the parasite — "he's as black as the crook; and for his size — he's a tall fellow, to be sure — but give me a light, stout, middle-sized" ——

"Plague on thee!" said Bucklaw, interrupting him, "and on me for listening to you! — you would say as much if I were hunch-backed. But as to Ravenswood — he has kept no terms with me — I'll keep none with him — if I *can* win this girl from him, I *will* win her."

"Win her? — 'sblood, you *shall* win her, point, quint, and quartorze, my king of trumps — you shall pique, repique, and capot him."

"Prithee, stop thy gambling cant for one instant," said Bucklaw. "Things have come thus far, that I have entertained the proposal of my kinswoman, agreed to the terms of jointure, amount of fortune, and so forth, and that the affair is to go forward when Lady Ashton comes down, for she takes her daughter and her son in her own hand. Now they want me to send up a confidential person with some writings."

"By this good wine, I'll ride to the end of the world — the very gates of Jericho, and the judgment-seat of Prester John, for thee!" ejaculated the Captain.

"Why, I believe you would do something for me, and a great deal for yourself. Now, any one could carry the writings; but you will have a little more to do. You must contrive to drop out before my Lady Ashton, just as if it were a matter of little consequence, the residence of Ravenswood at her husband's house, and his close intercourse with Miss Ashton; and you may tell her, that all the country talks of a visit from the Marquis of A——, as it is supposed, to make up the match betwixt Ravenswood and her daughter. I should like to hear what she says to all this; for, rat me, if I have any idea of starting for the plate at all if Ravenswood is to win the race, and he has odds against me already."

"Never a bit — the wench has too much sense — and in that belief I drink her health a third time; and, were time and place fitting, I would drink it on bended knees, and he that would not pledge me, I would make his guts garter his stockings."

"Hark ye, Craigengelt; as you are going into the society of women of rank," said Bucklaw, "I'll thank you to forget your strange blackguard oaths and

damme's — I'll write to them, though, that you are a blunt untaught fellow."

"Ay, ay," replied Craigengelt; "a plain, blunt, honest, downright soldier."

"Not too honest, nor too much of the soldier neither; but such as thou art, it is my luck to need thee, for I must have spurs put to Lady Ashton's motions."

"I'll dash them up to the rowel-heads," said Craigengelt; "she shall come here at the gallop, like a cow chased by a whole nest of hornets, and her tail twisted over her rump like a corkscrew."

"And hear ye, Craigie," said Bucklaw; "your boots and doublet are good enough to drink in, as the man says in the play, but they are somewhat too greasy for tea-table service — prithee, get thyself a little better rigged out, and here is to pay all charges."

"Nay, Bucklaw — on my soul, man — you use me ill — However," added Craigengelt, pocketing the money, "if you will have me so far indebted to you, I must be conforming."

"Well, horse and away!" said the patron, "so soon as you have got your riding livery in trim. You may ride the black crop-ear — and, hark ye, I'll make you a present of him to boot."

"I drink to the good luck of my mission," answered the ambassador, "in a half-pint bumper."

"I thank ye, Craigie, and pledge you — I see nothing against it but the father or the girl taking a tantrum, and I am told the mother can wind them both round her little finger. Take care not to affront her with any of your jacobite jargon."

"O ay, true — she is a whig, and a friend of old Sall of Marlborough — thank my stars, I can hoist

any colours at a pinch. I have fought as hard under John Churchill as ever I did under Dundee or the Duke of Berwick."

"I verily believe you, Craigie," said the lord of the mansion; "but, Craigie, do you, pray, step down to the cellar, and fetch us up a bottle of the Burgundy, 1678 — it is in the fourth bin from the right-hand turn — And I say, Craigie, you may fetch up half-a-dozen whilst you are about it. — Egad, we'll make a night on't!"

AUTHOR'S NOTES.

Note I., p. 191. — Raid of Caleb Balderstone.

The Raid of Caleb Balderstone on the cooper's kitchen, has been universally considered on the southern side of the Tweed as grotesquely and absurdly extravagant. The author can only say, that a similar anecdote was communicated to him, with date and names of the parties, by a noble Earl lately deceased, whose remembrances of former days, both in Scotland and England, while they were given with a felicity and power of humour never to be forgotten by those who had the happiness of meeting his lordship in familiar society, were especially invaluable from their extreme accuracy.

Speaking after my kind and lamented informer, with the omission of names only, the anecdote ran thus : — There was a certain bachelor gentleman in one of the midland counties of Scotland, second son of an ancient family, who lived on the fortune of a second son, *videlicet*, upon some miserably small annuity, which yet was so managed and stretched out by the expedients of his man John, that his mastêr kept the front rank with all the young men of quality in the county, and hunted, dined, diced, and drank with them, upon apparently equal terms.

It is true, that as the master's society was extremely amusing, his friends contrived to reconcile his man John to accept assistance of various kinds under the rose, which they dared not to have directly offered to his master. Yet, very consistently with all this good inclination to John, and John's master, it was thought among the young fox-hunters, that it would be an excellent jest, if possible, to take John at fault.

With this intention, and, I think, in consequence of a bet, a party of four or five of these youngsters arrived at the bachelor's

little mansion, which was adjacent to a considerable village. Here they alighted a short while before the dinner hour — for it was judged regular to give John's ingenuity a fair start — and, rushing past the astonished domestic, entered the little parlour ; and, telling some concerted story of the cause of their invasion, the self-invited guests asked their landlord if he could let them have some dinner. Their friend gave them a hearty and unembarrassed reception, and, for the matter of dinner, referred them to John. He was summoned accordingly — received his master's orders to get dinner ready for the party who had thus unexpectedly arrived; and, without changing a muscle of his countenance, promised prompt obedience. Great was the speculation of the visitors, and probably of the landlord also, what was to be the issue of John's fair promises. Some of the more curious had taken a peep into the kitchen, and could see nothing there to realize the prospect held out by the *Major-Domo*. But punctual as the dinner hour struck on the village clock, John placed before them a stately rump of boiled beef, with a proper accompaniment of greens, amply sufficient to dine the whole party, and to decide the bet against those among the visitors who expected to take John napping. The explanation was the same as in the case of Caleb Balderstone. John had used the freedom to carry off the *kail-pot* of a rich old chuff in the village, and brought it to his master's house, leaving the proprietor and his friends to dine on bread and cheese; and, as John said, "good enough for them." The fear of giving offence to so many persons of distinction, kept the poor man sufficiently quiet, and he was afterwards remunerated by some indirect patronage, so that the jest was admitted a good one on all sides. In England, at any period, or in some parts of Scotland at the present day, it might not have passed off so well.

Note II., p. 196. — Ancient Hospitality.

It was once the universal custom to place ale, wine, or some strong liquor, in the chamber of an honoured guest, to assuage his thirst should he feel any on awaking in the night, which, considering that the hospitality of that period often reached excess, was by no means unlikely. The author has met some instances of it in former days, and in old-fashioned families. It was, perhaps, no poetic fiction that records how

"My cummer and I lay down to sleep
With two pint stoups at our bed-feet;
And aye when we waken'd we drank them dry:
What think you o' my cummer and I?"

It is a current story in Teviotdale, that in the house of an ancient family of distinction, much addicted to the Presbyterian cause, a Bible was always put into the sleeping apartment of the guests, along with a bottle of strong ale. On some occasion there was a meeting of clergymen in the vicinity of the castle, all of whom were invited to dinner by the worthy Baronet, and several abode all night. According to the fashion of the times, seven of the reverend guests were allotted to one large barrack-room, which was used on such occasions of extended hospitality. The butler took care that the divines were presented, according to custom, each with a Bible and a bottle of ale. But after a little consultation among themselves, they are said to have recalled the domestic as he was leaving the apartment. "My friend," said one of the venerable guests, "you must know, when we meet together as brethren, the youngest minister reads aloud a portion of Scripture to the rest; — only one Bible, therefore, is necessary; take away the other six, and in their place bring six more bottles of ale."

This synod would have suited the "hermit sage" of Johnson, who answered a pupil who enquired for the real road to happiness, with the celebrated line,

"Come, my lad, and drink some beer!"

Note III., p. 217. — Appeal to Parliament.

The power of appeal from the Court of Session, the supreme Judges of Scotland, to the Scottish Parliament, in cases of civil right, was fiercely debated before the Union. It was a privilege highly desirable for the subject, as the examination and occasional reversal of their sentences in Parliament, might serve as a check upon the judges, which they greatly required at a time when they were much more distinguished for legal knowledge than for uprightness and integrity.

The members of the Faculty of Advocates, (so the Scottish barristers are termed,) in the year 1674, incurred the violent displeasure of the Court of Session, on account of their refusal to renounce the right of appeal to Parliament; and, by

a very arbitrary procedure, the majority of the number were banished from Edinburgh, and consequently deprived of their professional practice for several sessions, or terms. But, by the articles of the Union, an appeal to the British House of Peers has been secured to the Scottish subject, and that right has, no doubt, had its influence in forming the impartial and independent character which, much contrary to the practice of their predecessors, the Judges of the Court of Session have since displayed.

It is easy to conceive, that an old lawyer like the Lord Keeper in the text, should feel alarm at the judgments given in his favour, upon grounds of strict penal law, being brought to appeal under a new and dreaded procedure in a Court eminently impartial, and peculiarly moved by considerations of equity.

In earlier editions of this Work, this legal distinction was not sufficiently explained.

Note IV., p. 249. — Poor-Man-of-Mutton.

The blade-bone of a shoulder of mutton is called in Scotland "a poor man," as in some parts of England it is termed "a poor knight of Windsor;" in contrast, it must be presumed, to the baronial Sir Loin. It is said, that in the last age an old Scottish peer, whose conditions (none of the most gentle) were marked by a strange and fierce-looking exaggeration of the Highland countenance, chanced to be indisposed while he was in London attending Parliament. The master of the hotel where he lodged, anxious to show attention to his noble guest, waited on him to enumerate the contents of his well-stocked larder, so as to endeavour to hit on something which might suit his appetite. "I think, landlord," said his lordship, rising up from his couch, and throwing back the tartan plaid with which he had screened his grim and ferocious visage — "I think I could eat a morsel of a *poor man*." The landlord fled in terror, having no doubt that his guest was a cannibal, who might be in the habit of eating a slice of a tenant, as light food, when he was under regimen.

EDITOR'S NOTES.

(*a*) p. xxv. "Law's Memorials." These are "Memorials of the Memorable Things that fell out within this Island of Brittain from 1638 to 1684, by the Rev. Robert Law."

> All is bot gaistis and elriche fantasyis
> Of Brownyis and of bogillis full this buke,

as Gawain Douglas says. Law was Minister of Easter Kirkpatrick, and was expelled from his living in 1662 for nonconformity. He did not approve of the rising crushed at Bothwell Bridge. According to a version of the tragedy in Sharpe's notes, the *bride* lay weltering in blood, the bridegroom was found "in a state of idiotcy." The legend of the Bride is treated as purely fabulous in "Lands and Their Owners in Galloway" (Paterson, Edinburgh 1870, vol. i. p. 386), where the Dunbars of Baldoon are discussed. Sir Andrew Agnew, in his "Hereditary Sheriffs of Galloway" (Black, Edinburgh 1864), gives the facts as he finds them in local tradition, and discredits the idea that any constraint was exercised over the Bride in her marriage with Dunbar. Mr. John Murray Graham, in "Annals of the Viscount and First and Second Earls of Stair" (Blackwood, Edinburgh 1875, vol. i. p. 43), admits the attachment of the Bride to Lord Rutherford, and the pressure under which she accepted Dunbar. The Bride was married from Carscreugh Castle, now in ruins. The marriage contract, now in the Selkirk Papers, is dated Carscreugh, and signed by the Bride, Janet Dalrymple. It may be pointed out that the Elegy on the Bride makes no allusion to any calamity or extraordinary event, beyond her illness and death. The Elegy is the only contemporary evidence as to the whole affair.

(*b*) p. 1. "Punch and his wife Joan." A curious question for the antiquary arises: When did Joan become Judy?

(*c*) p. 18. "The Ape of the renowned Gines de Passamont." For this Ape see "Don Quixote," Part ii. Book ii. Chapters viii.–x.

(*d*) p. 34. "Monkish historians, whose ponderous volumes formed the chief and most valued contents of a Scottish historian of the period." "Historian" is clearly a word repeated twice, by accident. "Library" must be the reading intended.

(*e*) p. 38. "A bull's head, the ancient symbol of death," as in the capture and murder of the two Douglases in 1439–40 in the Castle of Edinburgh. "The chroniclers tell us that their doom was symbolically announced, according to a practice of the time, by putting a bull's head on the board." (Hill Burton, ii. 417.)

(*f*) p. 45. "Condictio indebiti." *Indebiti solutio*, where one through error makes payment of what is not due, he may in certain circumstances recover it by an action, which in the Roman Law was called *condictio indebiti*. According to the law of this country, when a person pays money under mistake, he has no right to recover that money, unless where it was a mistake in point of fact. If he pays by mistake in point of law there was at one time a doubt in Westminster Hall, but it is now settled that he has no right to recover it again. "Studies in Roman Law, with comparative views of the Laws of France, England, and Scotland, by Lord Mackenzie," 1862, pp. 226 and 228.

(*g*) p. 46. "There's bucks and raes on Bilhope braes." Scott has here adapted and altered an old verse, which ends —

> And Tarras for the good bull-trout,
> If he is taen in time.

(*h*) p. 66. "For a Grahame to wear green, a Bruce to kill a spider, or a St. Clair to cross the Ord on a Monday." These are the Scottish *taboos*. That of the Bruces is accounted for by a familiar anecdote. In the Celtic "Book of Honours" is a curious list of *taboos* imposed on the Irish kings.

(*i*) p. 84. "The ranting couplets of poor Lee." From "The Rival Queens."

(*k*) p. 161. "The best jeest in a' George Buchanan." George Buchanan's jests were, and perhaps still are, very popular in a chap-book adorned with a most unseemly frontispiece.

It is now probably missing from the little shop-windows which it used to decorate thirty years ago. This George Buchanan the jester has no real connection with the celebrated scholar.

(*l*) p. 179. "Worthy Mr. Cuffcushion and the Service Book." On the Service Book see Editor's Introduction to "Old Mortality." The arguments by which Dr. McCrie showed that the Service Book was not used in Scotland during the Restoration seem to have produced no effect on Scott.

(*m*) p. 205. "Scot of Scotstarvet." See "Old Mortality," Note II. (Author's). Sir Walter's edition of the "Staggering State of the Scots Statesmen" is of 1754. The book deals with the century from 1550 to 1650.

(*n*) p. 209. "The Claim of Right." A declaration by the Scotch Estates, April 11, 1689, wherein James VII. was declared to have forfeited the Crown, and the terms were set forth on which it was offered to William of Orange.

(*o*) p. 215. "Debitum fundi." "*Debitum fundi* is a real debt or lien over land which attached to the land itself into whose hands soever it may come — such a burden is constituted *ex lege*, or by paction. Thus feu duties and arrears of feu duties due to the superior and the Relief and Non-Entry duties before Declarator are by law real debts or *debita fundi*, which the superior is entitled to make effectual not only by a personal action against the vassal but by an action of Poinding against the ground." (Bell's "Law Dictionary.")

(*p*) p. 245. "There was a haggis in Dunbar." Scott's friend Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, according to Professor Masson, would "go about the streets, or sit alone in his room, repeating to himself such scraps as this: —

Hey, the haggis o' Dunbar,
Fatharalinkum feedle.
Mony better, few waur,
Fatharalinkum feedle.
("Edinburgh Sketches," p. 370.)

The component parts of this notable Haggis, as the song goes on to declare, were much in the taste peculiar to Swift and to Sharpe. The delectable ditty is in Sharpe's "Ballad Book," pp. 69, 70 (edition of 1880).

(*q*) p. 254. "Any hare that comes through among the deer." Witches in all countries have the gift of metamorphosing themselves into certain animals — snakes in Africa, foxes in Japan, hares in Scotland. Lafitau, an old French missionary, found among the Hurons a story of a witch changed into a bird, and wounded in that shape, which is a precise parallel to a Scotch story of a wounded witch hare. The belief is not extinct in the Highlands. A boatman from Badenoch told the following tale. "Every morning the witch would put on the shape of a hare and run before a shepherd's dogs, and lead them away from the sheep. He knew that the best plan was to shoot at her with a crooked sixpence" (as Henry Ashton, in the text, suggests a silver button), "and he hit her on the hind leg, and the dogs were after her, and chased the old woman into the witch's cottage. The shepherd ran after them, and found them tearing at the old woman; but the hare was twisted round their necks, and she was crying, 'Tighten, hare, tighten!' and it was choking them." It is fair to add that the boatman had no belief in this adventure, but told it as an example of surviving superstitions. The silver bullet is familiar in the case of Dundee.

Archbishop Sharpe's life was also proof against lead, according to his murderers.

ANDREW LANG.

GLOSSARY.

A', all.
A-bleeze, in a blaze.
Aboon, abune, above, up.
Ado, to-do.
Ae, one.
Aff, off.
Afore, before.
Agane, against.
Ahint, behind.
Ain, own.
Airt, to direct.
Aits, oats.
An, if.
Ance, once.
Ane, one.
Aneath, beneath.
Anent, about, concerning.
Anither, another.
Anker, a cask, a keg.
Annual, quit-rent.
Ass, ash.
A'thegither, altogether.
Auld, old.
Auld Reekie, Edinburgh.
Ava, at all.
Awa, away.
Awe, to owe.
Awfu', dreadful.
Aye, always.

Bailie, a Scotch alderman.
Bairn, a child.
Baith, both.
Bannock, a scone.
Bend-leather, thick sole leather.
Bended, cocked.
Bicker, a wooden cup or dish.
Bide, to wait.
Biggonet, a linen cap, a coif.
Birkie, a lively little fellow.
"Bit and the buffet," sustenance with hard usage.
Blaw, to blow.
Blithe, cheerful, happy.
"Body, a," one, a person.
Bogle, a ghost.
Bonny, pretty, handsome.
Bosky, bushy.
Bottleholder, a supporter.
"Boul o' a pint stoup," the handle of a two-quart pot.
Bourne, a rivulet, a dell.
Brach, a hound.
Brae, a hill.
Brander, to broil, to grill.
Bravery, display, finery.
Braw, brave, fine.
Brewis, the scum caused by boiling.
Brewster, a brewer.
Broche, a roasting-spit.
Busk, to deck up.

Ca', to call.
Cabbage, to cut off behind the horns.
Cadgy, cheerful.
Caickling, cackling.
Canna, cannot.
Cant, to sing in speaking.
Canty, cheerful.
Carle, a fellow.
Carline, a jade.
Cast, lot, fate.
"Cast o'," kind of.

"Caught in the manner," caught in a criminal act.
"Cauk and keel," fortune-telling by chalk marks.
Cauld, cold.
"Cauld be my cast," cold be my fate, or lot.
Certie! faith!
Change-house, an inn.
Chap, to strike.
Chappin, a pint and a half.
Chappit, struck.
Chaumer, a chamber.
"Cheap o't," a Scottish idiom applied to one who superabundantly deserves any affront or misfortune he has met with.
Chield, a fellow.
Claiths, clothes.
Claver, to talk nonsensically.
Clavers, idle talk, gossip.
"Claw up your mittens," to finish you.
"Clean pair of spurs, dish of," a hint to make a raid on one's neighbours.
Cockernony, a top-knot.
Cog, to empty or pour out.
"Copper captain," a counterfeit captain.
Crimp, to kidnap.
Cross, a silver coin marked with a cross.
Crowdy, meal and milk mixed in a cold state; a kind of pottage.
Cuittle, to diddle.
Cullion, a poltroon.
Culverin, an ancient small cannon.
Cummer, a gossip, or friend.
Cupar—"he who will to Cupar maun to Cupar," a wilful man must have his way.

Daffing, frolicking, larking.
Daft, crazy.
Dang, drove, knocked.
"Day, the," to-day.
Decore, to decorate.
Deevil, deil, the devil.
Demisaker, a light fieldpiece.
Denty, dainty.
Didna, did not.
"Ding doun," to knock down.
Dink, trim.
Dinna, do not.
Dirk, a dagger.
"Dispone upon," to dispose of.
Doited, dotard.
Doo, a dove.
Dour, stubborn.
Drap, a drop.
Drap-de-berry, fine woollen cloth coat.
Dribble, a drop.
Drought, thirst, dryness.
Drouthy, dry.
Dung, knocked.

Ee, an eye.
Een, the eyes.
E'en, even, just.
Eneugh, enough.
Exies, hysterics.
Expede, expedite.
Eyess, a hawk brought up from the nest.

Fa', to fall.
Fa'an, fallen.
Fash, trouble.
Fause, false.
Feared, afraid.
Feir, entire.
Feuar, a leaseholder.
Fit, the foot.
Flam, flummery.
Flankard, the side of the lower part of the abdomen.
Flee, to fly.
Flyte, to scold.
Flyting, a scolding.
Fog, moss.
Forby, besides.
"Fore, to the," to the front, in evidence.
Forgather, to come together, to become intimate.
Fou, a bushel.
"Foul thief," the devil.
Found, to go, to depend.
Foy, an entertainment.
Frae, from.

Freit, an omen.
Fu', full.

Gaberlunzie, a beggar, a mendicant.
Gae, go.
Gane, gone.
Gang, go.
Gar, to make, to oblige.
Gate, way, direction, place.
Gauger, an exciseman.
Gaun, going.
Gaunch, to thrust, to snatch
Gawsie, plump, jolly.
Gear, property.
Gentles, gentlefolks.
Ghaist, a ghost.
Gien, given.
Glent, whisk.
Glower, to gaze.
Gob, the mouth.
Gowd, gold.
Gowk, a fool, a cuckoo.
Gravaminous, important.
Gree, to agree.
Greet, to weep.
Grogram, coarse textile fabric.
Gude, good.
Gudeman, the head of the house, as applied to the husband.
Gudesire, grandfather.
Gudewife, a wife; as head of the female part of the household, landlady.
"**Gusting their gabs**," pleasing their palates.

Ha', a hall.
Hae, has, have.
Haggis, a favourite Scotch dish, made in a sheep's maw, of the lungs, heart, and liver of the same animal, minced with suet, onions, salt, and pepper, and mixed with oatmeal.
Hale, haill, whole.
Half-fou, two pecks, or half a bushel.
Hame, home.
"**Hame to himself**," restored to his reason.
Hasna, has not.
"**Hatted kitt**," a bowl of sour or curdled cream.
Haud, to hold.
Headmark, observation, thorough acquaintance.
Hegh! whew!
Hellicat, giddy, devil-may-care.
Housewifeskep, housewifery.
Hout! tut! "**Hout awa!**" go away!

Ilk, of the same name.
Ilka, each, every.
"**Ilka land its ain lauch**," every place its own custom.
Ill-cleckit, ill-hatched.
"**Ill-deedy gett**," a mischievous urchin.
Indweller, a resident.
Inlake, breach, loss.
I'se, I shall, I should.
Ither, other.
Izel, a hot ember.

Jeest, a jest.

Kail, broth.
Kain, tax in kind.
Kebbuck, cheese.
Keekit, peeped.
Ken, to know.
Kenspeckle, odd, peculiar.
Kipper, dried salmon.
Kittle, to tickle, ticklish.

Laird, the lord of a manor, squire.
Lammer, amber.
Landward, in the country, rural.
Lauch, law.
Law, a hill.
Lawing, bill, reckoning.
Leaf, a folding-door.
Leddy, a lady.
Lee, a lie.
Lickit, whipped.
Lift, the sky; also, to carry off.
Links, flat sandy ground on the sea-coast, dunes.
Lippen, to trust.
"**Lippening word**," an occasional thoughtless word.
"**Lith and limb**," joint and limb.

Lockit, locked.
"Lone woman," a single poor woman.
Loon, a fellow.
Loupen, leaped.
Lowe, a flame.
Luckie, goodie, an elderly woman, the keeper of an ale-house.
Lug, the ear.
Lum, a chimney.

Main, a hand at dice.
Mair, more.
Maist, most.
Mak, make.
Manse, a parsonage.
Maun, must.
Maut, malt.
Meal-poke, a meal-bag.
Melter, a herring full of milt.
Merk, a Scotch coin = 13⅓d.
Merse, Berwickshire.
Messan, a cur.
Mind, to remember.
Mirk, dark.
Mischief, to work mischief on.
Mony, many.
"Morn, the," to-morrow.
"Morn's morning," to-morrow morning.
Mountain-man, a Cameronian, the strictest sect of the Covenanters.
Muckle, much.
Mull, a snuff-horn.
Multiplepoinding, action on double distress, bill of interpleading.
"My certie!" my faith!

Napery, table linen.
Nar, never.
Nathless, nevertheless.
Ne'er-do-weel, a worthless do-nothing.
Neest, next.
Neuk, a nook, a corner.
Nevoy, a nephew.
No, not.
Nombles, a deer's entrails and testicles.
Nourice-ship, the office of nurse.
Nowt, black cattle.

O', of.
Ony, any.
Ou, oh.
Outby, from home.
Overcrow, to overpower.
Ower, over.
Owerlook, to ignore.

Parochine, a parish.
Pat, put.
Pearlings, lace.
"Pen can't play," pen can do nothing.
Perusal, a survey, an examination.
Pickle, a small quantity.
Pig, a stoneware vessel.
Pinner, the flap of a headdress.
"Pint stoup," a pint measure.
Pirn, a reel.
Pit-mirk, pitch-dark.
Plack, a small copper coin.
Plenishing, household furniture.
Pliskie, a prank.
Pock-pudding, a glutton.
Poind, to distrain.
Poke, a bag.
Praise, God, the object of praise.
Preceese, precise, particular.
"Pretty man," a brave, plucky man.
Pu', pull.
Puir, poor.
Pund Scots = 1s. 8d. sterling.

Quaigh, quegh, a wooden drinking-cup.
"Quarter's length," quarter of a yard.
Quean, a sprightly young woman, a flirt.

Rade, rode.
Rae, a roe-deer.
Railly, a kind of cloak or pelisse.
Rat! drat!
Raven-bone, the spoon-bone of the brisket, thrown to the rav-

ens by hunters in cutting up the stag.
"Red wud," downright mad.
Reaving, thieving.
Reek, smoke.
Rigs, ridges of a field.
Round, to whisper.
Roup, an auction; also, to sell off.
Rudas, a scolding jade.
Runlet, a small barrel.

Sae, so.
Sair, sore.
Sall, shall.
Sang, a song.
Saul, the soul.
Saulted, salted.
Saumon, salmon.
Saunt, a saint.
Saut, salt.
Sclater, a slater.
Sets, becomes.
"Shins to pine," the torture of the boot.
Shot, free.
Sic, siccan, such.
Siller, silver, money.
Sin, since.
Skart, to scratch.
Skirl, to scream.
Sliddery, slippery.
Slippit, slipped.
Sloken, to slake.
Sneck-drawer, a sly fellow.
Sneckdrawing, cunning.
Sneeshing, snishing, snuff.
Somegate, somewhere.
Soopit, swept.
Soothfast, true, honest.
Sopiting, setting at rest.
Sort, to supply, to suit; also, to give a drubbing.
Soup, sup; also, a small quantity.
Souse, to give a drubbing.
Sowens, a thick oatmeal gruel.
Speer, to ask.
Spule-bane, the shoulder-blade.
Stead, instead.
Steading, a farmyard.
Steer, to disturb.
Stoup, a liquid measure.
Stouthrief, robbery with violence.
Strength, a fortified house.
Stude, stood.
Suburb, outlying.
Suld, should.
Sumph, a dunce.
Sune, soon.
Surbated, exhausted.
Swank, to strike forcibly.
Swire, a mountain hollow.
Sybo, a young onion.
Synd, to rinse.
Syne, since.

Taen, taken.
Tait, a bunch.
Tak, take.
Tane, taken.
Tantrum, the pet, a vagary.
"Tap of tow," a bunch of tow on the distaff; a very irritable person.
Tass, a glass.
Tauld, told.
Teind, tiend, tithe.
Teugh, tough.
Thae, these, those.
Thegither, together.
Thickset, stout twilled cotton cloth.
Thought, somewhat.
Thowless, inactive.
Thunner, thunder.
Till, to.
Tod, a fox.
Tolbooth, a jail.
"Tongue of the trump," the leading man, the boss.
Tout, the pet.
Trow, to trust, to believe.
Tup, a ram.
Twa, two.
Twal, twelve.
Twilt, a quilted bed-cover.
Tyne, a branch of the stag's antlers.

Until, to.
Upby, up the way.

Vaik, to be vacant.
Virginals, an old sort of piano.
Visie, inspection.
Vivers, victuals.

Wad, would.
Wadna, would not.
Wadset, a pledge, a mortgage.
Wadsetter, a usurer.
Wae, woe, woful; sorry.
Walth, wealth, plenty.
Wame, the belly.
Wark, work.
Warst, worst.
Wat, wet.
Water-purpie, the common brook lime.
Waur, worse.
Wean, an infant.
Wee, little.
Weel, well.
Weid, a kind of fever.
Werena, were not.
Wha, who.
"What for," why.
Wheen, a few.
Whigmaleeries, fancy toys.
Whiles, sometimes, now and again.
Whilk, which.
Whim-wham, pastry.
Whinger, a sword, a hanger.
White-hass, a meat pudding.
Wi', with.
Win, to make way, to get.
Winna, will not.
Withie, the gallows, a halter.
"Within a quarter's length," within quarter of a yard.
"Won into," made way into.
Woodie, the gallows.
Wot, to know.
Wraith, a phantom said to appear before death.
Wrang, wrong.
Wud, mad.
Wull, will.
"Wull a wins!" woe's me! well-a-day!
Wyte, responsibility.

Ye's, you shall.
Yill, ale.
Yonder, there.
Yowl, to yell.

END OF VOL. I.

THE BRIDE OF LAMMERMOOR.

Vol. II.

THE

BRIDE OF LAMMERMOOR.

CHAPTER I.

And soon they spied the merry-men green,
And eke the coach and four.

Duke upon Duke.

CRAIGENGELT set forth on his mission so soon as his equipage was complete, prosecuted his journey with all diligence, and accomplished his commission with all the dexterity for which Bucklaw had given him credit. As he arrived with credentials from Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw, he was extremely welcome to both ladies; and those who are prejudiced in favour of a new acquaintance can, for a time at least, discover excellencies in his very faults, and perfections in his deficiencies. Although both ladies were accustomed to good society, yet, being predetermined to find out an agreeable and well-behaved gentleman in Mr. Hayston's friend, they succeeded wonderfully in imposing on themselves. It is true that Craigengelt was now handsomely dressed, and that was a point of no small consequence. But, independent of outward show, his blackguard impudence of address was construed into honourable bluntness, becoming his supposed military profes-

sion; his hectoring passed for courage, and his sauciness for wit. Lest, however, any one should think this a violation of probability, we must add, in fairness to the two ladies, that their discernment was greatly blinded, and their favour propitiated, by the opportune arrival of Captain Craigengelt in the moment when they were longing for a third hand to make a party at tredrille, in which, as in all games, whether of chance or skill, that worthy person was a great proficient.

When he found himself established in favour, his next point was how best to use it for the furtherance of his patron's views. He found Lady Ashton prepossessed strongly in favour of the motion, which Lady Blenkensop, partly from regard to her kinsman, partly from the spirit of match-making, had not hesitated to propose to her; so that his task was an easy one. Bucklaw, reformed from his prodigality, was just the sort of husband which she desired to have for her Shepherdess of Lammermoor; and while the marriage gave her an easy fortune, and a respectable country gentleman for her husband, Lady Ashton was of opinion that her destinies would be fully and most favourably accomplished. It so chanced, also, that Bucklaw, among his new acquisitions, had gained the management of a little political interest in a neighbouring county, where the Douglas family originally held large possessions. It was one of the bosom-hopes of Lady Ashton, that her eldest son, Sholto, should represent this county in the British Parliament, and she saw this alliance with Bucklaw as a circumstance which might be highly favourable to her wishes.

Craigengelt, who in his way by no means wanted

sagacity, no sooner discovered in what quarter the wind of Lady Ashton's wishes sate, than he trimmed his course accordingly. "There was little to prevent Bucklaw himself from sitting for the county — he must carry the heat — must walk the course. Two cousins-german — six more distant kinsmen, his factor and his chamberlain, were all hollow votes — and the Girnington interest had always carried, betwixt love and fear, about as many more. But Bucklaw cared no more about riding the first horse, and that sort of thing, than he, Craigengelt, did about a game at birkie — it was a pity his interest was not in good guidance."

All this Lady Ashton drank in with willing and attentive ears, resolving internally to be herself the person who should take the management of the political influence of her destined son-in-law, for the benefit of her eldest born, Sholto, and all other parties concerned.

When he found her ladyship thus favourably disposed, the Captain proceeded, to use his employer's phrase, to set spurs to her resolution, by hinting at the situation of matters at Ravenswood Castle, the long residence which the heir of that family had made with the Lord Keeper, and the reports which (though he would be d—d ere he gave credit to any of them) had been idly circulated in the neighbourhood. It was not the Captain's cue to appear himself to be uneasy on the subject of these rumours; but he easily saw from Lady Ashton's flushed cheek, hesitating voice, and flashing eye, that she had caught the alarm which he intended to communicate. She had not heard from her husband so often or so regularly as she thought him bound in duty to have written, and of

this very interesting intelligence, concerning his visit to the Tower of Wolf's Crag, and the guest whom, with such cordiality, he had received at Ravenswood Castle, he had suffered his lady to remain altogether ignorant, until she now learned it by the chance information of a stranger. Such concealment approached, in her apprehension, to a misprision, at least, of treason, if not to actual rebellion against her matrimonial authority; and in her inward soul did she vow to take vengeance on the Lord Keeper, as on a subject detected in meditating revolt. Her indignation burned the more fiercely, as she found herself obliged to suppress it in presence of Lady Blenkensop, the kinswoman, and of Craigengelt, the confidential friend of Bucklaw, of whose alliance she now became trebly desirous, since it occurred to her alarmed imagination, that her husband might, in his policy or timidity, prefer that of Ravenswood.

The Captain was engineer enough to discover that the train was fired; and therefore heard, in the course of the same day, without the least surprise, that Lady Ashton had resolved to abridge her visit to Lady Blenkensop, and set forth with the peep of morning on her return to Scotland, using all the dispatch which the state of the roads, and the mode of travelling, would possibly permit.

Unhappy Lord Keeper! — little was he aware what a storm was travelling towards him in all the speed with which an old-fashioned coach and six could possibly achieve its journey. He, like Don Gayferos, "forgot his lady fair and true," and was only anxious about the expected visit of the Marquis of A——. Soothfast tidings had assured him that this nobleman was at length, and without fail,

to honour his castle at one in the afternoon, being a late dinner-hour; and much was the bustle in consequence of the annunciation. The Lord Keeper traversed the chambers, held consultation with the butler in the cellars, and even ventured, at the risk of a *démêlé* with a cook, of a spirit lofty enough to scorn the admonitions of Lady Ashton herself, to peep into the kitchen. Satisfied, at length, that every thing was in as active a train of preparation as was possible, he summoned Ravenswood and his daughter to walk upon the terrace, for the purpose of watching, from that commanding position, the earliest symptoms of his lordship's approach. For this purpose, with slow and idle step, he paraded the terrace, which, flanked with a heavy stone battlement, stretched in front of the castle upon a level with the first story; while visitors found access to the court by a projecting gate-way, the bartizan or flat-leaded roof of which was accessible from the terrace by an easy flight of low and broad steps. The whole bore a resemblance partly to a castle, partly to a nobleman's seat; and though calculated, in some respects, for defence, evinced that it had been constructed under a sense of the power and security of the ancient Lords of Ravenswood.

This pleasant walk commanded a beautiful and extensive view. But what was most to our present purpose, there were seen from the terrace two roads, one leading from the east, and one from the westward, which, crossing a ridge opposed to the eminence on which the castle stood, at different angles, gradually approached each other, until they joined not far from the gate of the avenue. It was to the westward approach that the Lord Keeper, from a sort of fidgeting anxiety, his daughter, from com-

plaisance to him, and Ravenswood, though feeling some symptoms of internal impatience, out of complaisance to his daughter, directed their eyes to see the precursors of the Marquis's approach.

These were not long of presenting themselves. Two running footmen, (*a*)[1] dressed in white, with black jockey-caps, and long staffs in their hands, headed the train; and such was their agility, that they found no difficulty in keeping the necessary advance, which the etiquette of their station required, before the carriage and horsemen. Onward they came at a long swinging trot, arguing unwearied speed in their long-breathed calling. Such running footmen are often alluded to in old plays, (I would particularly instance "Middleton's Mad World my Masters,") and perhaps may be still remembered by some old persons in Scotland, as part of the retinue of the ancient nobility when travelling in full ceremony.[2] Behind these glancing me-

[1] See Editor's Notes at the end of the Volume. Wherever a similar reference occurs, the reader will understand that the same direction applies.

[2] Hereupon I, Jedediah Cleishbotham, crave leave to remark, *primo*, which signifies, in the first place, that, having in vain enquired at the Circulating Library in Gandercleugh, albeit it aboundeth in similar vanities, for this samyn Middleton and his Mad World, it was at length shown unto me amongst other ancient fooleries carefully compiled by one Dodsley, who, doubtless, hath his reward for neglect of precious time; and having misused so much of mine as was necessary for the purpose, I therein found that a play-man is brought in as a footman, whom a knight is made to greet facetiously with the epithet of "linen stocking, and three-score miles a-day."

Secundo, (which is secondly in the vernacular,) under Mr. Pattieson's favour, some men not altogether so old as he would represent them, do remember this species of menial, or forerunner. In evidence of which, I, Jedediah Cleishbotham, though mine eyes yet do me good service, remember me to have seen one of this tribe clothed in white, and bearing a staff, who ran

teors, who footed it as if the Avenger of Blood had been behind them, came a cloud of dust, raised by riders who preceded, attended, or followed, the state-carriage of the Marquis.

The privilege of nobility, in those days, had something in it impressive on the imagination. The dresses and liveries and number of their attendants, their style of travelling, the imposing, and almost warlike air of the armed men who surrounded them, placed them far above the laird, who travelled with his brace of footmen; and as to rivalry from the mercantile part of the community, these would as soon have thought of imitating the state equipage of the Sovereign. At present it is different; and I myself, Peter Pattieson, in a late journey to Edinburgh, had the honour, in the mail-coach phrase, to "change a leg" with a peer of the realm. It was not so in the days of which I write; and the Marquis's approach, so long expected in vain, now took place in the full pomp of ancient aristocracy. Sir William Ashton was so much interested in what he beheld, and in considering the ceremonial of reception in case any circumstance had been omitted, that he scarce heard his son Henry exclaim, "There is another coach and six coming down the east road, papa — can they both belong to the Marquis of A——?"

At length, when the youngster had fairly compelled his attention by pulling his sleeve,

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daily before the state-coach of the umquhile John, Earl of Hopeton, father of this Earl, Charles, that now is; unto whom it may be justly said, that Renown playeth the part of a running footman, or precursor; and, as the poet singeth —

"Mars standing by asserts his quarrel,
And Fame flies after with a laurel."

J. C.

"He turned his eyes, and, as he turn'd, survey'd
An awful vision."

Sure enough, another coach and six, with four servants or out-riders in attendance, was descending the hill from the eastward, at such a pace as made it doubtful which of the carriages thus approaching from different quarters would first reach the gate at the extremity of the avenue. The one coach was green, the other blue; and not the green and blue chariots in the Circus of Rome or Constantinople excited more turmoil among the citizens than the double apparition occasioned in the mind of the Lord Keeper. We all remember the terrible exclamation of the dying profligate, when a friend, to destroy what he supposed the hypochondriac idea of a spectre appearing in a certain shape at a given hour, placed before him a person dressed up in the manner he described. "*Mon Dieu!*" said the expiring sinner, who, it seems, saw both the real and polygraphic apparition — "*il y en a deux!*"

The surprise of the Lord Keeper was scarcely less unpleasing at the duplication of the expected arrival; his mind misgave him strangely. There was no neighbour who would have approached so unceremoniously, at a time when ceremony was held in such respect. It must be Lady Ashton, said his conscience, and followed up the hint with an anxious anticipation of the purpose of her sudden and unannounced return. He felt that he was caught "in the manner." That the company in which she had so unluckily surprised him was likely to be highly distasteful to her, there was no question; and the only hope which remained for him was her high sense of dignified propriety, which, he trusted, might prevent a public explosion. But

so active were his doubts and fears, as altogether to derange his purposed ceremonial for the reception of the Marquis.

These feelings of apprehension were not confined to Sir William Ashton. "It is my mother — it is my mother!" said Lucy, turning as pale as ashes, and clasping her hands together as she looked at Ravenswood.

"And if it be Lady Ashton," said her lover to her in a low tone, "what can be the occasion of such alarm? — Surely the return of a lady to the family from which she has been so long absent, should excite other sensations than those of fear and dismay."

"You do not know my mother," said Miss Ashton, in a tone almost breathless with terror; "what will she say when she sees you in this place!"

"My stay has been too long," said Ravenswood, somewhat haughtily, "if her displeasure at my presence is likely to be so formidable. My dear Lucy," he resumed, in a tone of soothing encouragement, "you are too childishly afraid of Lady Ashton; she is a woman of family — a lady of fashion — a person who must know the world, and what is due to her husband and her husband's guests."

Lucy shook her head; and, as if her mother, still at the distance of half a mile, could have seen and scrutinized her deportment, she withdrew herself from beside Ravenswood, and, taking her brother Henry's arm, led him to a different part of the terrace. The Keeper also shuffled down towards the portal of the great gate, without inviting Ravenswood to accompany him, and thus he remained standing alone on the terrace, deserted and shunned, as it were, by the inhabitants of the mansion.

This suited not the mood of one who was proud in proportion to his poverty, and who thought that, in sacrificing his deep-rooted resentments so far as to become Sir William Ashton's guest, he conferred a favour and received none. "I can forgive Lucy," he said to himself; "she is young, timid, and conscious of an important engagement assumed without her mother's sanction; yet she should remember with whom it has been assumed, and leave me no reason to suspect that she is ashamed of her choice. For the Keeper, sense, spirit, and expression seem to have left his face and manner since he had the first glimpse of Lady Ashton's carriage. I must watch how this is to end; and, if they give me reason to think myself an unwelcome guest, my visit is soon abridged."

With these suspicions floating on his mind, he left the terrace, and, walking towards the stables of the castle, gave directions that his horse should be kept in readiness, in case he should have occasion to ride abroad.

In the meanwhile the drivers of the two carriages, the approach of which had occasioned so much dismay at the castle, had become aware of each other's presence, as they approached upon different lines to the head of the avenue, as a common centre. Lady Ashton's driver and postilions instantly received orders to get foremost, if possible, her ladyship being desirous of despatching her first interview with her husband before the arrival of these guests, whoever they might happen to be. On the other hand, the coachman of the Marquis, conscious of his own dignity and that of his master, and observing the rival charioteer was mending his pace, resolved, like a true brother of the whip, whether ancient or modern,

to vindicate his right of precedence. So that, to increase the confusion of the Lord Keeper's understanding, he saw the short time which remained for consideration abridged by the haste of the contending coachmen, who, fixing their eyes sternly on each other, and applying the lash smartly to their horses, began to thunder down the descent with emulous rapidity, while the horsemen who attended them were forced to put on to a handgallop.

Sir William's only chance now remaining was the possibility of an overturn, and that his lady or visitor might break their necks. I am not aware that he formed any distinct wish on the subject, but I have no reason to think that his grief in either case would have been altogether inconsolable. This chance, however, also disappeared; for Lady Ashton, though insensible to fear, began to see the ridicule of running a race with a visitor of distinction, the goal being the portal of her own castle, and commanded her coachman, as they approached the avenue, to slacken his pace, and allow precedence to the stranger's equipage; a command which he gladly obeyed, as coming in time to save his honour, the horses of the Marquis's carriage being better, or, at least, fresher than his own. He restrained his pace, therefore, and suffered the green coach to enter the avenue, with all its retinue, which pass it occupied with the speed of a whirlwind. The Marquis's laced charioteer no sooner found the *pas d'avance* was granted to him, than he resumed a more deliberate pace, at which he advanced under the embowering shade of the lofty elms, surrounded by all the attendants; while the carriage of Lady Ashton followed, still more slowly, at some distance.

In the front of the castle, and beneath the portal

which admitted guests into the inner court, stood Sir William Ashton, much perplexed in mind, his younger son and daughter beside him, and in their rear a train of attendants of various ranks, in and out of livery. The nobility and gentry of Scotland, at this period, were remarkable even to extravagance for the number of their servants, whose services were easily purchased in a country where men were numerous beyond proportion to the means of employing them.

The manners of a man, trained like Sir William Ashton, are too much at his command to remain long disconcerted with the most adverse concurrence of circumstances. He received the Marquis, as he alighted from his equipage, with the usual compliments of welcome; and, as he ushered him into the great hall, expressed his hope that his journey had been pleasant. The Marquis was a tall, well-made man, with a thoughtful and intelligent countenance, and an eye, in which the fire of ambition had for some years replaced the vivacity of youth; a bold, proud, expression of countenance, yet chastened by habitual caution, and the desire which, as the head of a party, he necessarily entertained of acquiring popularity. He answered with courtesy the courteous enquiries of the Lord Keeper, and was formally presented to Miss Ashton, in the course of which ceremony the Lord Keeper gave the first symptom of what was chiefly occupying his mind, by introducing his daughter as "his wife, Lady Ashton."

Lucy blushed; the Marquis looked surprised at the extremely juvenile appearance of his hostess, and the Lord Keeper with difficulty rallied himself so far as to explain. "I should have said my daugh-

ter, my lord; but the truth is, that I saw Lady Ashton's carriage enter the avenue shortly after your lordship's, and" ——

"Make no apology, my lord," replied his noble guest; "let me entreat you will wait on your lady, and leave me to cultivate Miss Ashton's acquaintance. I am shocked my people should have taken precedence of our hostess at her own gate; but your lordship is aware, that I supposed Lady Ashton was still in the south. Permit me to beseech you will wave ceremony, and hasten to welcome her."

This was precisely what the Lord Keeper longed to do; and he instantly profited by his lordship's obliging permission. To see Lady Ashton, and encounter the first burst of her displeasure in private, might prepare her, in some degree, to receive her unwelcome guests with due decorum. As her carriage, therefore, stopped, the arm of the attentive husband was ready to assist Lady Ashton in dismounting. Looking as if she saw him not, she put his arm aside, and requested that of Captain Craigengelt, who stood by the coach with his laced hat under his arm, having acted as *cavalière servente*, or squire in attendance, during the journey. Taking hold of this respectable person's arm as if to support her, Lady Ashton traversed the court, uttering a word or two by way of direction to the servants, but not one to Sir William, who in vain endeavoured to attract her attention, as he rather followed than accompanied her into the hall, in which they found the Marquis in close conversation with the Master of Ravenswood: Lucy had taken the first opportunity of escaping. There was embarrassment on every countenance except that of the Marquis of A——; for even Craigengelt's im-

pudence was hardly able to veil his fear of Ravenswood, and the rest felt the awkwardness of the position in which they were thus unexpectedly placed.

After waiting a moment to be presented by Sir William Ashton, the Marquis resolved to introduce himself. "The Lord Keeper," he said, bowing to Lady Ashton, "has just introduced to me his daughter as his wife — he might very easily present Lady Ashton as his daughter, so little does she differ from what I remember her some years since. — Will she permit an old acquaintance the privilege of a guest?"

He saluted the lady with too good a grace to apprehend a repulse, and then proceeded — "This, Lady Ashton, is a peace-making visit, and therefore I presume to introduce my cousin, the young Master of Ravenswood, to your favourable notice."

Lady Ashton could not choose but curtsy; but there was in her obeisance an air of haughtiness approaching to contemptuous repulse. Ravenswood could not choose but bow; but his manner returned the scorn with which he had been greeted.

"Allow me," she said, "to present to your lordship *my* friend." Craigengelt, with the forward impudence which men of his cast mistake for ease, made a sliding bow to the Marquis, which he graced by a flourish of his gold-laced hat. The lady turned to her husband — "You and I, Sir William," she said, and these were the first words she had addressed to him, "have acquired new acquaintances since we parted — let me introduce the acquisition I have made to mine — Captain Craigengelt."

Another bow, and another flourish of the gold-laced hat, which was returned by the Lord Keeper

without intimation of former recognition, and with that sort of anxious readiness, which intimated his wish, that peace and amnesty should take place betwixt the contending parties, including the auxiliaries on both sides. "Let me introduce you to the Master of Ravenswood," said he to Captain Craigengelt, following up the same amicable system. But the Master drew up his tall form to the full extent of his height, and without so much as looking towards the person thus introduced to him, he said, in a marked tone, "Captain Craigengelt and I are already perfectly well acquainted with each other."

"Perfectly — perfectly," replied the Captain, in a mumbling tone, like that of a double echo, and with a flourish of his hat, the circumference of which was greatly abridged, compared with those which had so cordially graced his introduction to the Marquis and the Lord Keeper.

Lockhard, followed by three menials, now entered with wine and refreshments, which it was the fashion to offer as a whet before dinner; and when they were placed before the guests, Lady Ashton made an apology for withdrawing her husband from them for some minutes upon business of special import. The Marquis, of course, requested her ladyship would lay herself under no restraint; and Craigengelt, bolting with speed a second glass of racy canary, hastened to leave the room, feeling no great pleasure in the prospect of being left alone with the Marquis of A—— and the Master of Ravenswood; the presence of the former holding him in awe, and that of the latter in bodily terror.

Some arrangements about his horse and baggage formed the pretext for his sudden retreat, in which

he persevered, although Lady Ashton gave Lockhard orders to be careful most particularly to accommodate Captain Craigengelt with all the attendance which he could possibly require. The Marquis and the Master of Ravenswood were thus left to communicate to each other their remarks upon the reception which they had met with, while Lady Ashton led the way, and her lord followed somewhat like a condemned criminal, to her ladyship's dressing-room.

So soon as the spouses had both entered, her ladyship gave way to that fierce audacity of temper, which she had with difficulty suppressed, out of respect to appearances. She shut the door behind the alarmed Lord Keeper, took the key out of the spring-lock, and with a countenance which years had not bereft of its haughty charms, and eyes which spoke at once resolution and resentment, she addressed her astounded husband in these words: — "My lord, I am not greatly surprised at the connexions you have been pleased to form during my absence — they are entirely in conformity with your birth and breeding; and if I did expect any thing else, I heartily own my error, and that I merit, by having done so, the disappointment you had prepared for me."

"My dear Lady Ashton — my dear Eleanor," said the Lord Keeper, "listen to reason for a moment, and I will convince you I have acted with all the regard due to the dignity, as well as the interest, of my family."

"To the interest of *your* family I conceive you perfectly capable of attending," returned the indignant lady, "and even to the dignity of your own family also, as far as it requires any looking after

— But as mine happens to be inextricably involved with it, you will excuse me if I choose to give my own attention so far as that is concerned."

"What would you have, Lady Ashton?" said the husband — "What is it that displeases you? Why is it, that on your return after so long an absence, I am arraigned in this manner?"

"Ask your own conscience, Sir William, what has prompted you to become a renegade to your political party and opinions, and led you, for what I know, to be on the point of marrying your only daughter to a beggarly jacobite bankrupt, the inveterate enemy of your family to the boot."

"Why, what, in the name of common sense and common civility, would you have me do, madam?" answered her husband — "Is it possible for me, with ordinary decency, to turn a young gentleman out of my house, who saved my daughter's life and my own, but the other morning as it were?"

"Saved your life! I have heard of that story," said the lady — "the Lord Keeper was scared by a dun cow, and he takes the young fellow who killed her for Guy of Warwick — any butcher from Haddington may soon have an equal claim on your hospitality."

"Lady Ashton," stammered the Keeper, "this is intolerable — and when I am desirous, too, to make you easy by any sacrifice — if you would but tell me what you would be at."

"Go down to your guests," said the imperious dame, "and make your apology to Ravenswood, that the arrival of Captain Craigengelt and some other friends, renders it impossible for you to offer him lodgings at the castle — I expect young Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw."

"Good heavens, madam!" ejaculated her husband — "Ravenswood to give place to Craigengelt, a common gambler and an informer! — it was all I could do to forbear desiring the fellow to get out of my house, and I was much surprised to see him in your ladyship's train."

"Since you saw him there, you might be well assured," answered this meek helpmate, "that he was proper society. As to this Ravenswood, he only meets with the treatment which, to my certain knowledge, he gave to a much-valued friend of mine, who had the misfortune to be his guest some time since. But take your resolution; for, if Ravenswood does not quit the house, I will."

Sir William Ashton paced up and down the apartment in the most distressing agitation; fear, and shame, and anger contending against the habitual deference he was in the use of rendering to his lady. At length it ended, as is usual with timid minds placed in such circumstances, in his adopting a *mezzo termine*, a middle measure.

"I tell you frankly, madam, I neither can nor will be guilty of the incivility you propose to the Master of Ravenswood — he has not deserved it at my hand. If you will be so unreasonable as to insult a man of quality under your own roof, I cannot prevent you; but I will not at least be the agent in such a preposterous proceeding."

"You will not?" asked the lady.

"No, by heavens, madam!" her husband replied; "ask me any thing congruent with common decency, as to drop his acquaintance by degrees, or the like — but to bid him leave my house is what I will not, and cannot consent to."

"Then the task of supporting the honour of the

family will fall on me, as it has often done before," said the lady.

She sat down, and hastily wrote a few lines. The Lord Keeper made another effort to prevent her taking a step so decisive, just as she opened the door to call her female attendant from the anteroom. "Think what you are doing, Lady Ashton — you are making a mortal enemy of a young man, who is like to have the means of harming us"——

"Did you ever know a Douglas who feared an enemy?" answered the lady contemptuously.

"Ay, but he is as proud and vindictive as an hundred Douglasses, and an hundred devils to boot. Think of it for a night only."

"Not for another moment," answered the lady; — "here, Mrs. Patullo, give this billet to young Ravenswood."

"To the Master, madam?" said Mrs. Patullo.

"Ay, to the Master, if you call him so."

"I wash my hands of it entirely," said the Keeper; "and I shall go down into the garden, and see that Jardine gathers the winter fruit for the dessert."

"Do so," said the lady, looking after him with glances of infinite contempt; "and thank God that you leave one behind you as fit to protect the honour of the family, as you are to look after pippins and pears."

The Lord Keeper remained long enough in the garden to give her ladyship's mind time to explode, and to let, as he thought, at least the first violence of Ravenswood's displeasure blow over. When he entered the hall, he found the Marquis of A—— giving orders to some of his attendants. He seemed in high displeasure, and interrupted an apology

which Sir William had commenced, for having left his lordship alone.

"I presume, Sir William, you are no stranger to this singular billet with which my kinsman of Ravenswood" (an emphasis on the word *my*) "has been favoured by your lady — and, of course, that you are prepared to receive my adieus — My kinsman is already gone, having thought it unnecessary to offer any on his part, since all former civilities had been cancelled by this singular insult."

"I protest, my lord," said Sir William, holding the billet in his hand, "I am not privy to the contents of this letter. I know Lady Ashton is a warm-tempered and prejudiced woman, and I am sincerely sorry for any offence that has been given or taken; but I hope your lordship will consider that a lady"——

"Should bear herself towards persons of a certain rank with the breeding of one," said the Marquis, completing the half-uttered sentence.

"True, my lord," said the unfortunate Keeper; "but Lady Ashton is still a woman" ——

"And as such, methinks," said the Marquis, again interrupting him, "should be taught the duties which correspond to her station. But here she comes, and I will learn from her own mouth the reason of this extraordinary and unexpected affront offered to my near relation, while both he and I were her ladyship's guests."

Lady Ashton accordingly entered the apartment at this moment. Her dispute with Sir William, and a subsequent interview with her daughter, had not prevented her from attending to the duties of her toilette. She appeared in full dress; and, from the character of her countenance and manner, well be-

came the splendour with which ladies of quality then appeared on such occasions.

The Marquis of A—— bowed haughtily, and she returned the salute with equal pride and distance of demeanour. He then took from the passive hand of Sir William Ashton the billet he had given him the moment before he approached the lady, and was about to speak, when she interrupted him. "I perceive, my lord, you are about to enter upon an unpleasant subject. I am sorry any such should have occurred at this time, to interrupt, in the slightest degree, the respectful reception due to your lordship — but so it is. — Mr. Edgar Ravenswood, for whom I have addressed the billet in your lordship's hand, has abused the hospitality of this family, and Sir William Ashton's softness of temper, in order to seduce a young person into engagements without her parents' consent, and of which they never can approve."

Both gentlemen answered at once, — "My kinsman is incapable,"—— said the Lord Marquis.

"I am confident that my daughter Lucy is still more incapable"—— said the Lord Keeper.

Lady Ashton at once interrupted, and replied to them both. — "My Lord Marquis, your kinsman, if Mr. Ravenswood has the honour to be so, has made the attempt privately to secure the affections of this young and inexperienced girl. Sir William Ashton, your daughter has been simple enough to give more encouragement than she ought to have done to so very improper a suitor."

"And I think, madam," said the Lord Keeper, losing his accustomed temper and patience, "that if you had nothing better to tell us, you had better have kept this family secret to yourself also."

"You will pardon me, Sir William," said the lady, calmly; "the noble Marquis has a right to know the cause of the treatment I have found it necessary to use to a gentleman whom he calls his blood-relation."

"It is a cause," muttered the Lord Keeper, "which has emerged since the effect has taken place; for, if it exists at all, I am sure she knew nothing of it when her letter to Ravenswood was written."

"It is the first time that I have heard of this," said the Marquis; "but since your ladyship has tabled a subject so delicate, permit me to say, that my kinsman's birth and connexions entitled him to a patient hearing, and at least a civil refusal, even in case of his being so ambitious as to raise his eyes to the daughter of Sir William Ashton."

"You will recollect, my lord, of what blood Miss Lucy Ashton is come by the mother's side," said the lady.

"I do remember your descent — from a younger branch of the house of Angus," said the Marquis — "and your ladyship — forgive me, lady — ought not to forget that the Ravenswoods have thrice intermarried with the main-stem. Come, madam — I know how matters stand — old and long-fostered prejudices are difficult to get over — I make every allowance for them — I ought not, and I would not otherwise have suffered my kinsman to depart alone, expelled, in a manner, from this house — but I had hopes of being a mediator. I am still unwilling to leave you in anger — and shall not set forward till after noon, as I rejoin the Master of Ravenswood upon the road a few miles from hence. Let us talk over this matter more coolly."

"It is what I anxiously desire, my lord," said

Sir William Ashton, eagerly. "Lady Ashton, we will not permit my Lord of A—— to leave us in displeasure. We must compel him to tarry dinner at the castle."

"The castle," said the lady, "and all that it contains, are at the command of the Marquis, so long as he chooses to honour it with his residence; but touching the farther discussion of this disagreeable topic" ——

"Pardon me, good madam," said the Marquis; "but I cannot allow you to express any hasty resolution on a subject so important. I see that more company is arriving; and since I have the good fortune to renew my former acquaintance with Lady Ashton, I hope she will give me leave to avoid perilling what I prize so highly upon any disagreeable subject of discussion — at least, till we have talked over more pleasant topics."

The lady smiled, curtsied, and gave her hand to the Marquis, by whom, with all the formal gallantry of the time, which did not permit the guest to tuck the lady of the house under the arm, as a rustic does his sweetheart at a wake, she was ushered to the eating-room.

Here they were joined by Bucklaw, Craigengelt, and other neighbours, whom the Lord Keeper had previously invited to meet the Marquis of A——. An apology, founded upon a slight indisposition, was alleged as an excuse for the absence of Miss Ashton, whose seat appeared unoccupied. The entertainment was splendid to profusion, and was protracted till a late hour.

CHAPTER II.

Such was our fallen father's fate,
  Yet better than mine own;
He shared his exile with his mate,
  I'm banish'd forth alone.

WALLER.

I WILL not attempt to describe the mixture of indignation and regret with which Ravenswood left the seat which had belonged to his ancestors. The terms in which Lady Ashton's billet was couched rendered it impossible for him, without being deficient in that spirit of which he perhaps had too much, to remain an instant longer within its walls. The Marquis, who had his share in the affront, was, nevertheless, still willing to make some efforts at conciliation. He therefore suffered his kinsman to depart alone, making him promise, however, that he would wait for him at the small inn called the Tod's-hole, situated, as our readers may be pleased to recollect, half way betwixt Ravenswood Castle and Wolf's Crag, and about five Scottish miles distant from each. Here the Marquis proposed to join the Master of Ravenswood, either that night or the next morning. His own feelings would have induced him to have left the castle directly, but he was loath to forfeit, without at least one effort, the advantages which he had proposed from his visit to the Lord Keeper; and the Master of Ravenswood was, even in the very heat of his resentment, un-

willing to foreclose any chance of reconciliation which might arise out of the partiality which Sir William Ashton had shown towards him, as well as the intercessory arguments of his noble kinsman. He himself departed without a moment's delay, farther than was necessary to make this arrangement.

At first he spurred his horse at a quick pace through an avenue of the park, as if, by rapidity of motion, he could stupify the confusion of feelings with which he was assailed. But as the road grew wilder and more sequestered, and when the trees had hidden the turrets of the castle, he gradually slackened his pace, as if to indulge the painful reflections which he had in vain endeavoured to repress. The path in which he found himself led him to the Mermaiden's Fountain, and to the cottage of Alice; and the fatal influence which superstitious belief attached to the former spot, as well as the admonitions which had been in vain offered to him by the inhabitant of the latter, forced themselves upon his memory. "Old saws speak truth," he said to himself; "and the Mermaiden's Well has indeed witnessed the last act of rashness of the heir of Ravenswood.—Alice spoke well," he continued, "and I am in the situation which she foretold—or rather, I am more deeply dishonoured—not the dependant and ally of the destroyer of my father's house, as the old sibyl presaged, but the degraded wretch, who has aspired to hold that subordinate character, and has been rejected with disdain."

We are bound to tell the tale as we have received it; and, considering the distance of the time, and propensity of those through whose mouths it has

passed to the marvellous, this could not be called a Scottish story, unless it manifested a tinge of Scottish superstition. As Ravenswood approached the solitary fountain, he is said to have met with the following singular adventure: — His horse, which was moving slowly forward, suddenly interrupted its steady and composed pace, snorted, reared, and, though urged by the spur, refused to proceed, as if some object of terror had suddenly presented itself. On looking to the fountain, Ravenswood discerned a female figure, dressed in a white, or rather greyish mantle, placed on the very spot on which Lucy Ashton had reclined while listening to the fatal tale of love. His immediate impression was, that she had conjectured by which path he would traverse the park on his departure, and placed herself at this well-known and sequestered place of rendezvous, to indulge her own sorrow and his in a parting interview. In this belief he jumped from his horse, and, making its bridle fast to a tree, walked hastily towards the fountain, pronouncing eagerly, yet under his breath, the words, "Miss Ashton! — Lucy!"

The figure turned as he addressed it, and displayed to his wondering eyes the features, not of Lucy Ashton, but of old blind Alice. The singularity of her dress, which rather resembled a shroud than the garment of a living woman — the appearance of her person, larger, as it struck him, than it usually seemed to be — above all, the strange circumstance of a blind, infirm, and decrepit person being found alone and at a distance from her habitation, (considerable, if her infirmities be taken into account,) combined to impress him with a feeling of wonder approaching to fear. As he approached, she arose slowly from her seat, held her shrivelled hand up

as if to prevent his coming more near, and her withered lips moved fast, although no sound issued from them. Ravenswood stopped; and as, after a moment's pause, he again advanced towards her, Alice, or her apparition, moved or glided backwards towards the thicket, still keeping her face turned towards him. The trees soon hid the form from his sight; and, yielding to the strong and terrific impression that the being which he had seen was not of this world, the Master of Ravenswood remained rooted to the ground whereon he had stood when he caught his last view of her. At length, summoning up his courage, he advanced to the spot on which the figure had seemed to be seated; but neither was there pressure of the grass, nor any other circumstance, to induce him to believe that what he had seen was real and substantial.

Full of those strange thoughts and confused apprehensions which awake in the bosom of one who conceives he has witnessed some preternatural appearance, the Master of Ravenswood walked back towards his horse, frequently however looking behind him, not without apprehension, as if expecting that the vision would re-appear. But the apparition, whether it was real, or whether it was the creation of a heated and agitated imagination, returned not again; and he found his horse sweating and terrified, as if experiencing that agony of fear, with which the presence of a supernatural being is supposed to agitate the brute creation. The Master mounted, and rode slowly forward, soothing his steed from time to time, while the animal seemed internally to shrink and shudder, as if expecting some new object of fear at the opening of every glade. The rider, after a moment's consideration,

resolved to investigate the matter further. "Can my eyes have deceived me," he said, "and deceived me for such a space of time? — Or are this woman's infirmities but feigned, in order to excite compassion? — And even then, her motion resembled not that of a living and existing person. Must I adopt the popular creed, and think that the unhappy being has formed a league with the powers of darkness? — I am determined to be resolved — I will not brook imposition even from my own eyes."

In this uncertainty he rode up to the little wicket of Alice's garden. Her seat beneath the birch-tree was vacant, though the day was pleasant, and the sun was high. He approached the hut, and heard from within the sobs and wailing of a female. No answer was returned when he knocked, so that, after a moment's pause, he lifted the latch and entered. It was indeed a house of solitude and sorrow. Stretched upon her miserable pallet lay the corpse of the last retainer of the house of Ravenswood, who still abode on their paternal domains! Life had but shortly departed; and the little girl, by whom she had been attended in her last moments, was wringing her hands and sobbing, betwixt childish fear and sorrow, over the body of her mistress.

The Master of Ravenswood had some difficulty to compose the terrors of the poor child, whom his unexpected appearance had at first rather appalled than comforted; and when he succeeded, the first expression which the girl used intimated that "he had come too late." Upon enquiring the meaning of this expression, he learned that the deceased, upon the first attack of the mortal agony, had sent a peasant to the castle to beseech an interview of the Master of Ravenswood, and had expressed the utmost

impatience for his return. But the messengers of the poor are tardy and negligent: the fellow had not reached the castle, as was afterwards learned, until Ravenswood had left it, and had then found too much amusement among the retinue of the strangers to return in any haste to the cottage of Alice. Meantime her anxiety of mind seemed to increase with the agony of her body; and, to use the phrase of Babie, her only attendant, "she prayed powerfully that she might see her master's son once more, and renew her warning." She died just as the clock in the distant village tolled one; and Ravenswood remembered, with internal shuddering, that he had heard the chime sound through the wood just before he had seen what he was now much disposed to consider as the spectre of the deceased.

It was necessary, as well from his respect to the departed as in common humanity to her terrified attendant, that he should take some measures to relieve the girl from her distressing situation. The deceased, he understood, had expressed a desire to be buried in a solitary churchyard, near the little inn of the Tod's-hole, called the Hermitage, or more commonly Armitage, in which lay interred some of the Ravenswood family, and many of their followers. Ravenswood conceived it his duty to gratify this predilection, so commonly found to exist among the Scottish peasantry, and dispatched Babie to the neighbouring village to procure the assistance of some females, assuring her that, in the meanwhile, he would himself remain with the dead body, which, as in Thessaly of old, it is accounted highly unfit to leave without a watch.

Thus, in the course of a quarter of an hour or little more, he found himself sitting a solitary guard

over the inanimate corse of her, whose dismissed spirit, unless his eyes had strangely deceived him, had so recently manifested itself before him. Notwithstanding his natural courage, the Master was considerably affected by a concurrence of circumstances so extraordinary. "She died expressing her eager desire to see me. Can it be, then,"—was his natural course of reflection—"can strong and earnest wishes, formed during the last agony of nature, survive its catastrophe, surmount the awful bounds of the spiritual world, and place before us its inhabitants in the hues and colouring of life?—And why was that manifested to the eye which could not unfold its tale to the ear?—and wherefore should a breach be made in the laws of nature, yet its purpose remain unknown? Vain questions, which only death, when it shall make me like the pale and withered form before me, can ever resolve."

He laid a cloth, as he spoke, over the lifeless face, upon whose features he felt unwilling any longer to dwell. He then took his place in an old carved oaken chair, ornamented with his own armorial bearings, which Alice had contrived to appropriate to her own use in the pillage which took place among creditors, officers, domestics, and messengers of the law, when his father left Ravenswood Castle for the last time. Thus seated, he banished, as much as he could, the superstitious feelings which the late incident naturally inspired. His own were sad enough, without the exaggeration of supernatural terror, since he found himself transferred from the situation of a successful lover of Lucy Ashton, and an honoured and respected friend of her father, into the melancholy and solitary guard-

ian of the abandoned and forsaken corse of a common pauper.

He was relieved, however, from his sad office sooner than he could reasonably have expected, considering the distance betwixt the hut of the deceased and the village, and the age and infirmities of three old women, who came from thence, in military phrase, to relieve guard upon the body of the defunct. On any other occasion the speed of these reverend sibyls would have been much more moderate, for the first was eighty years of age and upwards, the second was paralytic, and the third lame of a leg from some accident. But the burial duties rendered to the deceased, are, to the Scottish peasant of either sex, a labour of love. I know not whether it is from the temper of the people, grave and enthusiastic as it certainly is, or from the recollection of the ancient Catholic opinions, when the funeral rites were always considered as a period of festival to the living; but feasting, good cheer, and even inebriety, were, and are, the frequent accompaniments of a Scottish old-fashioned burial. What the funeral feast, or *dirgie*, (*b*) as it is called, was to the men, the gloomy preparations of the dead body for the coffin were to the women. To straight the contorted limbs upon a board used for that melancholy purpose, to array the corpse in clean linen, and over that in its woollen shroud, were operations committed always to the old matrons of the village, and in which they found a singular and gloomy delight.

The old women paid the Master their salutations with a ghastly smile, which reminded him of the meeting betwixt Macbeth and the witches on the blasted heath of Forres. He gave them some money,

and recommended to them the charge of the dead body of their contemporary, an office which they willingly undertook; intimating to him at the same time that he must leave the hut, in order that they might begin their mournful duties. Ravenswood readily agreed to depart, only tarrying to recommend to them due attention to the body, and to receive information where he was to find the sexton, or beadle, who had in charge the deserted churchyard of the Armitage, in order to prepare matters for the reception of old Alice in the place of repose which she had selected for herself.

"Ye'll no be pinched to find out Johnie Mortsheugh," said the elder sibyl, and still her withered cheek bore a grisly smile — "he dwells near the Tod's-hole, an house of entertainment where there has been mony a blithe birling — for death and drink-draining are near neighbours to ane anither."

"Ay! and that's e'en true, cummer," said the lame hag, propping herself with a crutch which supported the shortness of her left leg, "for I mind when the father of this Master of Ravenswood that is now standing before us, sticked young Blackhall with his whinger, for a wrang word said ower their wine, or brandy, or what not — he gaed in as light as a lark, and he came out wi' his feet foremost. I was at the winding of the corpse; and when the bluid was washed off, he was a bonny bouk of man's body."

It may be easily believed that this ill-timed anecdote hastened the Master's purpose of quitting a company so evil-omened and so odious. Yet, while walking to the tree to which his horse was tied, and busying himself with adjusting the girths of the saddle, he could not avoid hearing, through

the hedge of the little garden, a conversation respecting himself, betwixt the lame woman and the octogenarian sibyl. The pair had hobbled into the garden to gather rosemary, southernwood, rue, and other plants proper to be strewed upon the body, and burned by way of fumigation in the chimney of the cottage. The paralytic wretch, almost exhausted by the journey, was left guard upon the corpse, lest witches or fiends might play their sport with it.

The following low croaking dialogue was necessarily overheard by the Master of Ravenswood: —

"That's a fresh and full-grown hemlock, Annie Winnie — mony a cummer lang syne wad hae sought nae better horse to flee over hill and how, through mist and moonlight, and light down in the King of France's cellar."

"Ay, cummer! but the very deil has turned as hard-hearted now as the Lord Keeper, and the grit folk that hae breasts like whin-stane. They prick us and they pine us, and they pit us on the pinnywinkles for witches; and, if I say my prayers backwards ten times ower, Satan will never gie me amends o' them."

"Did ye ever see the foul thief?" asked her neighbour.

"Na!" replied the other spokeswoman; "but I trow I hae dreamed of him mony a time, and I think the day will come they will burn me for't. — But ne'er mind, cummer! we hae this dollar of the Master's, and we'll send doun for bread and for yill, and tobacco, and a drap brandy to burn, and a wee pickle saft sugar — and be there deil, or nae deil, lass, we'll hae a merry night o't."

Here her leathern chops uttered a sort of cack-

ling ghastly laugh, resembling, to a certain degree, the cry of the screech-owl.

"He's a frank man, and a free-handed man, the Master," said Annie Winnie, "and a comely personage — broad in the shouthers, and narrow around the lungies — he wad mak a bonny corpse — I wad like to hae the streaking and winding o' him."

"It is written on his brow, Annie Winnie," returned the octogenarian, her companion, "that hand of woman, or of man either, will never straught him — dead-deal will never be laid on his back — make you your market of that, for I hae it frae a sure hand."

"Will it be his lot to die on the battle-ground then, Ailsie Gourlay? — Will he die by the sword or the ball, as his forbears hae dune before him, mony ane o' them?"

"Ask nae mair questions about it — he'll no be graced sae far," replied the sage.

"I ken ye are wiser than ither folk, Ailsie Gourlay — But wha tell'd ye this?"

"Fashna your thumb about that, Annie Winnie," answered the sibyl — "I hae it frae a hand sure eneugh."

"But ye said ye never saw the foul thief," reiterated her inquisitive companion.

"I hae it frae as sure a hand," said Ailsie, "and frae them that spaed his fortune before the sark gaed ower his head."

"Hark! I hear his horse's feet riding aff," said the other; "they dinna sound as if good luck was wi' them."

"Mak haste, sirs," cried the paralytic hag from the cottage, "and let us do what is needfu', and say what is fitting; for, if the dead corpse binna

straughted, it will girn and thraw, and that will fear the best o' us."

Ravenswood was now out of hearing. He despised most of the ordinary prejudices about witchcraft, omens, and vaticination, to which his age and country still gave such implicit credit, that to express a doubt of them, was accounted a crime equal to the unbelief of Jews or Saracens; he knew also that the prevailing belief concerning witches, operating upon the hypochondriac habits of those whom age, infirmity, and poverty rendered liable to suspicion, and enforced by the fear of death, and the pangs of the most cruel tortures, often extorted those confessions which encumber and disgrace the criminal records of Scotland during the seventeenth century. But the vision of that morning, whether real or imaginary, had impressed his mind with a superstitious feeling which he in vain endeavoured to shake off. The nature of the business which awaited him at the little inn, called Tod's-hole, where he soon after arrived, was not of a kind to restore his spirits.

It was necessary he should see Mortsheugh, the sexton of the old burial-ground at Armitage, to arrange matters for the funeral of Alice; and as the man dwelt near the place of her late residence, the Master, after a slight refreshment, walked towards the place where the body of Alice was to be deposited. It was situated in the nook formed by the eddying sweep of a stream, which issued from the adjoining hills. A rude cavern in an adjacent rock, which, in the interior, was cut into the shape of a cross, formed the hermitage, where some Saxon saint had in ancient times done penance, and given name to the place. The rich Abbey of Colding-

hame had, in latter days, established a chapel in the neighbourhood, of which no vestige was now visible, though the churchyard which surrounded it was still, as upon the present occasion, used for the interment of particular persons. One or two shattered yew-trees still grew within the precincts of that which had once been holy ground. Warriors and barons had been buried there of old, but their names were forgotten, and their monuments demolished. The only sepulchral memorials which remained, were the upright headstones which mark the graves of persons of inferior rank. The abode of the sexton was a solitary cottage adjacent to the ruined wall of the cemetery, but so low, that, with its thatch, which nearly reached the ground, covered with a thick crop of grass, fog, and house-leeks, it resembled an overgrown grave. On enquiry, however, Ravenswood found that the man of the last mattock was absent at a bridal, being fiddler as well as grave-digger to the vicinity. He therefore retired to the little inn, leaving a message that early next morning he would again call for the person, whose double occupation connected him at once with the house of mourning and the house of feasting.

An outrider of the Marquis arrived at Tod's-hole shortly after, with a message, intimating that his master would join Ravenswood at that place on the following morning; and the Master, who would otherwise have proceeded to his old retreat at Wolf's Crag, remained there accordingly, to give meeting to his noble kinsman.

CHAPTER III.

Hamlet. Has this fellow no feeling of his business — he sings at grave making.
Horatio. Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.
Hamlet. 'Tis e'en so: the hand of little employment hath the daintier sense.

Hamlet, Act V. Scene I.

THE sleep of Ravenswood was broken by ghastly and agitating visions, and his waking intervals disturbed by melancholy reflections on the past, and painful anticipations of the future. He was perhaps the only traveller who ever slept in that miserable kennel without complaining of his lodgings, or feeling inconvenience from their deficiencies. It is when "the mind is free the body's delicate." Morning, however, found the Master an early riser, in hopes that the fresh air of the dawn might afford the refreshment which night had refused him. He took his way toward the solitary burial-ground, which lay about half a mile from the inn.

The thin blue smoke, which already began to curl upward, and to distinguish the cottage of the living from the habitation of the dead, apprized him that its inmate had returned and was stirring. Accordingly, on entering the little churchyard, he saw the old man labouring in a half-made grave. My destiny, thought Ravenswood, seems to lead me to scenes of fate and of death; but these are childish thoughts, and they shall not master me. I will not again suffer my imagination to beguile my senses. —

The old man rested on his spade as the Master approached him, as if to receive his commands; and as he did not immediately speak, the sexton opened the discourse in his own way.

"Ye will be a wedding customer, sir, I'se warrant?"

"What makes you think so, friend?" replied the Master.

"I live by twa trades, sir," replied the blithe old man; "fiddle, sir, and spade; filling the world, and emptying of it; and I suld ken baith cast of customers by head-mark in thirty years' practice."

"You are mistaken, however, this morning," replied Ravenswood.

"Am I?" said the old man, looking keenly at him, "troth and it may be; since, for as brent as your brow is, there is something sitting upon it this day, that is as near akin to death as to wedlock. Weel, weel; the pick and shovel are as ready to your order as bow and fiddle."

"I wish you," said Ravenswood, "to look after the decent interment of an old woman, Alice Gray, who lived at the Craig-foot in Ravenswood Park."

"Alice Gray! blind Alice!" said the sexton; "and is she gane at last? that's another jow of the bell to bid me be ready. I mind when Habbie Gray brought her down to this land; a likely lass she was then, and looked ower her southland nose at us a'. I trow her pride got a downcome. And is she e'en gane?"

"She died yesterday," said Ravenswood; "and desired to be buried here, beside her husband; you know where he lies, no doubt?"

"Ken where he lies?" answered the sexton, with national indirection of response, "I ken whar a'

body lies, that lies here. But ye were speaking o' her grave? — Lord help us — it's no an ordinar grave that will haud her in, if a's true that folk said of Alice in her auld days; and if I gae to six feet deep, — and a warlock's grave shouldna be an inch mair ebb, or her ain witch cummers would soon whirl her out of her shroud for a' their auld acquaintance — and be't six feet, or be't three, wha's to pay the making o't, I pray ye?"

"I will pay that, my friend, and all other reasonable charges."

"Reasonable charges?" said the sexton; "ou, there's grund-mail — and bell-siller — (though the bell's broken nae doubt) — and the kist — and my day's wark — and my bit fee — and some brandy and yill to the drigie — I am no thinking that you can inter her, to ca' decently, under saxteen pund Scots."

"There is the money, my friend," said Ravenswood, "and something over. Be sure you know the grave."

"Ye'll be ane o' her English relations, I'se warrant," said the hoary man of skulls; "I hae heard she married far below her station; it was very right to let her bite on the bridle when she was living, and it's very right to gie her a decent burial now she's dead, for that's a matter o' credit to yoursell rather than to her. Folk may let their kindred shift for themsells when they are alive, and can bear the burden of their ain misdoings; but it's an unnatural thing to let them be buried like dogs, when a' the discredit gangs to the kindred — what kens the dead corpse about it?"

"You would not have people neglect their relations on a bridal occasion neither?" said Ravens-

wood, who was amused with the professional limitation of the grave-digger's philanthropy.

The old man cast up his sharp grey eyes with a shrewd smile, as if he understood the jest, but instantly continued, with his former gravity, — "Bridals — wha wad neglect bridals, that had ony regard for plenishing the earth? To be sure, they suld be celebrated with all manner of good cheer, and meeting of friends, and musical instruments, harp, sackbut, and psaltery; or gude fiddle and pipes, when these auld-warld instruments of melody are hard to be compassed."

"The presence of the fiddle, I daresay," replied Ravenswood, "would atone for the absence of all the others."

The sexton again looked sharply up at him, as he answered, "Nae doubt — nae doubt — if it were weel played; — but yonder," he said, as if to change the discourse, "is Halbert Gray's lang hame, that ye were speering after, just the third bourock beyond the muckle through-stane that stands on sax legs yonder, abune some ane of the Ravenswoods; for there is mony of their kin and followers here, deil lift them! though it isna just their main burial-place."

"They are no favourites, then, of yours, these Ravenswoods?" said the Master, not much pleased with the passing benediction which was thus bestowed on his family and name.

"I kenna wha should favour them," said the grave-digger; "when they had lands and power, they were ill guides of them baith, and now their head's down, there's few care how lang they may be of lifting it again."

"Indeed!" said Ravenswood; "I never heard

that this unhappy family deserved ill-will at the hands of their country. I grant their poverty — if that renders them contemptible."

"It will gang a far way till't," said the sexton of Hermitage, "ye may tak my word for that — at least, I ken naething else that suld mak myself contemptible, and folk are far frae respecting me as they wad do if I lived in a twa-lofted sclated house. But as for the Ravenswoods, I hae seen three generations of them, and deil ane to mend other."

"I thought they had enjoyed a fair character in the country," said their descendant.

"Character! Ou, ye see, sir," said the sexton, "as for the auld gude-sire body of a lord, I lived on his land when I was a swanking young chield, and could hae blawn the trumpet wi' ony body, for I had wind eneugh then — and touching this trumpeter Marine that I have heard play afore the Lords of the Circuit, I wad hae made nae mair o' him than of a bairn and a bawbee whistle — I defy him to hae played 'Boot and saddle,' or 'Horse and away,' or 'Gallants, come trot,' with me—he hadna the tones."

"But what is all this to old Lord Ravenswood, my friend?" said the Master, who, with an anxiety not unnatural in his circumstances, was desirous of prosecuting the musician's first topic — "What had his memory to do with the degeneracy of the trumpet music?"

"Just this, sir," answered the sexton, "that I lost my wind in his service. Ye see I was trumpeter at the castle, and had allowance for blawing at break of day, and at dinner-time, and other whiles when there was company about, and it pleased my lord; and when he raised his militia to caper awa to Bothwell Brigg against the wrang-headed wastland

whigs, I behoved, reason or nane, to munt a horse and caper awa wi' them."

"And very reasonable," said Ravenswood; "you were his servant and vassal."

"Servitor, say ye?" replied the sexton, "and so I was — but it was to blaw folk to their warm dinner, or at the warst to a decent kirkyard, and no to skirl them awa to a bluidy brae side, where there was deil a bedral but the hooded craw. But bide ye — ye shall hear what cam o't, and how far I am bund to be bedesman to the Ravenswoods. — Till't, ye see, we gaed on a braw simmer morning, twenty-fourth of June, saxteen hundred and se'enty-nine, of a' the days of the month and year, — drums beat — guns rattled — horses kicked and trampled. Hackstoun of Rathillet keepit the brigg wi' musket and carabine and pike, sword and scythe for what I ken, and we horsemen were ordered down to cross at the ford, — I hate fords at a' times, let abe when there's thousands of armed men on the other side. There was auld Ravenswood brandishing his Andrew Ferrara at the head, and crying to us to come and buckle to, as if we had been gaun to a fair, — there was Caleb Balderstone, that is living yet, flourishing in the rear, and swearing Gog and Magog, he would put steel through the guts of ony man that turned bridle, — there was young Allan Ravenswood, that was then Master, wi' a bended pistol in his hand, — it was a mercy it gaed na aff, — crying to me, that had scarce as much wind left as serve the necessary purpose of my ain lungs, 'Sound, you poltroon! sound, you damned cowardly villain, or I will blow your brains out!' and, to be sure, I blew sic points of war, that the scraugh of a clockin-hen was music to them."

"Well, sir, cut all this short," said Ravenswood.

"Short! — I had like to hae been cut short mysell, in the flower of my youth, as Scripture says; and that's the very thing that I compleen o'. — Weel! in to the water we behoved a' to splash, heels ower head, sit or fa' — ae horse driving on anither, as is the way of brute beasts, and riders that hae as little sense, — the very bushes on the ither side were ableeze, wi' the flashes of the whig guns; and my horse had just taen the grund, when a blackavised westland carle — I wad mind the face o' him a hundred years yet — an ee like a wild falcon's, and a beard as broad as my shovel, clapped the end o' his lang black gun within a quarter's length of my lug! — by the grace o' Mercy, the horse swarved round, and I fell aff at the tae side as the ball whistled by at the tither, and the fell auld lord took the whig such a swauk wi' his broadsword that he made twa pieces o' his head, and down fell the lurdane wi' a' his bowk abune me."

"You were rather obliged to the old lord, I think," said Ravenswood.

"Was I? my sartie! first for bringing me into jeopardy, would I nould I — and then for whomling a chield on the tap o' me, that dang the very wind out of my body? — I hae been short-breathed ever since, and canna gang twenty yards without peghing like a miller's aiver."

"You lost, then, your place as trumpeter?" said Ravenswood.

"Lost it? to be sure I lost it," replied the sexton, "for I couldna hae played pew upon a dry humlock; but I might hae dune weel eneugh, for I keepit the wage and the free house, and little to do but play on the fiddle to them, but for Allan,

last Lord Ravenswood, that was far waur than ever his father was."

"What," said the Master, "did my father—I mean, did his father's son — this last Lord Ravenswood, deprive you of what the bounty of his father allowed you?"

"Ay, troth did he," answered the old man; "for he loot his affairs gang to the dogs, and let in this Sir William Ashton on us, that will gie naething for naething and just removed me and a' the puir creatures that had bite and soup at the castle, and a hole to put our heads in, when things were in the auld way."

"If Lord Ravenswood protected his people, my friend, while he had the means of doing so, I think they might spare his memory," replied the Master.

"Ye are welcome to your ain opinion, sir," said the sexton; "but ye winna persuade me that he did his duty, either to himsell or to huz puir dependent creatures, in guiding us the gate he has done — he might hae gien us liferent tacks of our bits o' houses and yards — and me, that's an auld man, living in yon miserable cabin, that's fitter for the dead than the quick, and killed wi' rheumatise, and John Smith in my dainty bit mailing, and his window glazen, and a' because Ravenswood guided his gear like a fule!"

"It is but too true," said Ravenswood, conscience-struck; "the penalties of extravagance extend far beyond the prodigal's own sufferings."

"However," said the sexton, "this young man Edgar is like to avenge my wrangs on the haill of his kindred."

"Indeed?" said Ravenswood; "why should you suppose so?"

"They say he is about to marry the daughter of Leddy Ashton; and let her leddyship get his head ance under her oxter, and see you if she winna gie his neck a thraw. Sorra a bit, if I were him — Let her alane for hauding a' thing in het water that draws near her — sae the warst wish I shall wish the lad is, that he may take his ain creditable gate o't, and ally himsell wi' his father's enemies, that have taken his broad lands and my bonny kailyard from the lawful owners thereof."

Cervantes acutely remarks, that flattery is pleasing even from the mouth of a madman; and censure, as well as praise, often affects us, while we despise the opinions and motives on which it is founded and expressed. Ravenswood, abruptly reiterating his command that Alice's funeral should be attended to, flung away from the sexton, under the painful impression that the great, as well as the small vulgar, would think of his engagement with Lucy like this ignorant and selfish peasant.

"And I have stooped to subject myself to these calumnies, and am rejected notwithstanding! Lucy, your faith must be true and perfect as the diamond, to compensate for the dishonour which men's opinions, and the conduct of your mother, attach to the heir of Ravenswood!"

As he raised his eyes, he beheld the Marquis of A——, who, having arrived at the Tod's-hole, had walked forth to look for his kinsman.

After mutual greetings, he made some apology to the Master for not coming forward on the preceding evening. "It was his wish," he said, "to have done so, but he had come to the knowledge of some matters which induced him to delay his purpose. I find," he proceeded, "there has been a love

affair here, kinsman; and though I might blame you for not having communicated with me, as being in some degree the chief of your family" ——

"With your lordship's permission," said Ravenswood, "I am deeply grateful for the interest you are pleased to take in me — but *I* am the chief and head of my family."

"I know it — I know it," said the Marquis; "in a strict heraldic and genealogical sense, you certainly are so — what I mean is, that being in some measure under my guardianship" ——

"I must take the liberty to say, my lord," answered Ravenswood — and the tone in which he interrupted the Marquis boded no long duration to the friendship of the noble relatives, when he himself was interrupted by the little sexton, who came puffing after them, to ask if their honours would choose music at the change-house to make up for short cheer.

"We want no music," said the Master abruptly.

"Your honour disna ken what ye're refusing, then," said the fiddler, with the impertinent freedom of his profession. "I can play, 'Wilt thou do't again,' and 'the Auld Man's Mear's Dead,' sax times better than ever Pattie Birnie. I'll get my fiddle in the turning of a coffin-screw."

"Take yourself away, sir," said the Marquis.

"And if your honour be a north-country gentleman," said the persevering minstrel, "whilk I wad judge from your tongue, I can play 'Liggeram Cosh,' and 'Mullin Dhu,' and 'the Cummers of Athole.'"

"Take yourself away, friend; you interrupt our conversation."

"Or if, under your honour's favour, ye should

happen to be a thought honest, I can play," (this in a low and confidential tone,) "'Killiecrankie,' and 'the King shall hae his ain,' and 'the Auld Stewarts back again,'—and the wife at the change-house is a decent discreet body, neither kens nor cares what toasts are drucken, and what tunes are played in her house — she's deaf to a' thing but the clink o' the siller."

The Marquis, who was sometimes suspected of jacobitism, could not help laughing as he threw the fellow a dollar, and bid him go play to the servants if he had a mind, and leave them at peace.

"Aweel, gentlemen," said he, "I am wishing your honours gude day — I'll be a' the better of the dollar, and ye'll be the waur of wanting the music, I'se tell ye — But I'se gang hame, and finish the grave in the tuning o' a fiddle-string, lay by my spade, and then get my tother bread-winner, and awa to your folk, and see if they hae better lugs than their masters."

CHAPTER IV.

True love, an thou be true,
  Thou has ane kittle part to play;
For fortune, fashion, fancy, and thou,
  Maun strive for many a day.

I've kend by mony a friend's tale,
  Far better by this heart of mine,
What time and change of fancy avail
  A true-love knot to untwine.

HENDERSOUN.

"I WISHED to tell you, my good kinsman," said the Marquis, "now that we are quit of that impertinent fiddler, that I had tried to discuss this love affair of yours with Sir William Ashton's daughter. I never saw the young lady but for a few minutes to-day; so, being a stranger to her personal merits, I pay a compliment to you, and offer her no offence, in saying you might do better."

"My lord, I am much indebted for the interest you have taken in my affairs," said Ravenswood. "I did not intend to have troubled you in any matter concerning Miss Ashton. As my engagement with that young lady has reached your lordship, I can only say, that you must necessarily suppose that I was aware of the objections to my marrying into her father's family, and of course must have been completely satisfied with the reasons by which these objections are overbalanced, since I have proceeded so far in the matter."

"Nay, Master, if you had heard me out," said his noble relation, "you might have spared that observation; for, without questioning that you had reasons which seemed to you to counterbalance every other obstacle, I set myself, by every means that it became me to use towards the Ashtons, to persuade them to meet your views."

"I am obliged to your lordship for your unsolicited intercession," said Ravenswood; "especially as I am sure your lordship would never carry it beyond the bounds which it became me to use."

"Of that," said the Marquis, "you may be confident; I myself felt the delicacy of the matter too much to place a gentleman nearly connected with my house in a degrading or dubious situation with these Ashtons. But I pointed out all the advantages of their marrying their daughter into a house so honourable, and so nearly related with the first in Scotland; I explained the exact degree of relationship in which the Ravenswoods stand to ourselves; and I even hinted how political matters were like to turn, and what cards would be trumps next Parliament. I said I regarded you as a son — or a nephew, or so — rather than as a more distant relation; and that I made your affair entirely my own."

"And what was the issue of your lordship's explanation?" said Ravenswood, in some doubt whether he should resent or express gratitude for his interference.

"Why, the Lord Keeper would have listened to reason," said the Marquis; "he is rather unwilling to leave his place, which, in the present view of a change, must be vacated; and, to say truth, he seemed to have a liking for you, and to be

sensible of the general advantages to be attained by such a match. But his lady, who is tongue of the trump, Master," ——

"What of Lady Ashton, my lord?" said Ravenswood; "let me know the issue of this extraordinary conference — I can bear it."

"I am glad of that, kinsman," said the Marquis, "for I am ashamed to tell you half what she said. It is enough — her mind is made up — and the mistress of a first-rate boarding-school could not have rejected with more haughty indifference the suit of a half-pay Irish officer, beseeching permission to wait upon the heiress of a West India planter, than Lady Ashton spurned every proposal of mediation which it could at all become me to offer in behalf of you, my good kinsman. I cannot guess what she means. A more honourable connexion she could not form, that's certain. As for money and land, that used to be her husband's business rather than hers; I really think she hates you for having the rank which her husband has not, and perhaps for not having the lands that her goodman has. But I should only vex you to say more about it — here we are at the change-house."

The Master of Ravenswood paused as he entered the cottage, which reeked through all its crevices, and they were not few, from the exertions of the Marquis's travelling-cooks to supply good cheer, and spread, as it were, a table in the wilderness.

"My Lord Marquis," said Ravenswood, "I already mentioned that accident has put your lordship in possession of a secret, which, with my consent, should have remained one even to you, my kinsman, for some time. Since the secret was to part from my own custody, and that of the only person

besides who was interested in it, I am not sorry it should have reached your lordship's ears, as being fully aware that you are my noble kinsman and friend."

"You may believe it is safely lodged with me, Master of Ravenswood," said the Marquis; "but I should like well to hear you say, that you renounced the idea of an alliance, which you can hardly pursue without a certain degree of degradation."

"Of that, my lord, I shall judge," answered Ravenswood, "and I hope with delicacy as sensitive as any of my friends. But I have no engagement with Sir William and Lady Ashton. It is with Miss Ashton alone that I have entered upon the subject, and my conduct in the matter shall be entirely ruled by hers. If she continues to prefer me in my poverty to the wealthier suitors whom her friends recommend, I may well make some sacrifice to her sincere affection — I may well surrender to her the less tangible and less palpable advantages of birth, and the deep-rooted prejudices of family hatred. If Miss Lucy Ashton should change her mind on a subject of such delicacy, I trust my friends will be silent on my disappointment, and I shall know how to make my enemies so."

"Spoke like a gallant young nobleman," said the Marquis; "for my part I have that regard for you, that I should be sorry the thing went on. This Sir William Ashton was a pretty enough pettifogging kind of a lawyer twenty years ago, and betwixt battling at the bar, and leading in committees of Parliament, he has got well on — the Darien matter lent him a lift, for he had good intelligence and sound views, and sold out in time — but the best work is had out of him. No government will take him at

his own, or rather his wife's, extravagant valuation; and betwixt his indecision and her insolence, from all I can guess, he will outsit his market, and be had cheap when no one will bid for him. I say nothing of Miss Ashton; but I assure you, a connexion with her father will be neither useful nor ornamental, beyond that part of your father's spoils which he may be prevailed upon to disgorge by way of tocher good — and take my word for it, you will get more if you have spirit to bell the cat with him in the House of Peers. — And I will be the man, cousin," continued his lordship, "will course the fox for you, and make him rue the day that ever he refused a composition too honourable for him, and proposed by me on the behalf of a kinsman."

There was something in all this that, as it were, overshot the mark. Ravenswood could not disguise from himself that his noble kinsman had more reasons for taking offence at the reception of his suit, than regarded his interest and honour, yet he could neither complain nor be surprised that it should be so. He contented himself therefore with repeating, that his attachment was to Miss Ashton personally; that he desired neither wealth nor aggrandizement from her father's means and influence; and that nothing should prevent his keeping his engagement, excepting her own express desire that it should be relinquished — and he requested as a favour that the matter might be no more mentioned betwixt them at present, assuring the Marquis of A—— that he should be his confident in its progress or its interruption.

The Marquis soon had more agreeable, as well as more interesting subjects on which to converse. A foot post, who had followed him from Edinburgh to

Ravenswood Castle, and had traced his steps to the Tod's-hole, brought him a packet laden with good news. The political calculations of the Marquis had proved just, both in London and at Edinburgh, and he saw almost within his grasp, the pre-eminence for which he had panted. — The refreshments which the servants had prepared were now put on the table, and an epicure would perhaps have enjoyed them with additional zest, from the contrast which such fare afforded to the miserable cabin in which it was served up.

The turn of conversation corresponded with and added to the social feelings of the company. The Marquis expanded with pleasure on the power which probable incidents were likely to assign to him, and on the use which he hoped to make of it in serving his kinsman Ravenswood. Ravenswood could but repeat the gratitude which he really felt, even when he considered the topic as too long dwelt upon. The wine was excellent, notwithstanding its having been brought in a runlet from Edinburgh; and the habits of the Marquis, when engaged with such good cheer, were somewhat sedentary. And so it fell out that they delayed their journey two hours later than was their original purpose.

"But what of that, my good young friend?" said the Marquis; "your Castle of Wolf's Crag is but at five or six miles distance, and will afford the same hospitality to your kinsman of A——, that it gave to this same Sir William Ashton."

"Sir William took the castle by storm," said Ravenswood, "and, like many a victor, had little reason to congratulate himself on his conquest."

"Well, well!" said Lord A——, whose dignity was something relaxed by the wine he had drunk,

—"I see I must bribe you to harbour me — Come, pledge me in a bumper health to the last young lady that slept at Wolf's Crag, and liked her quarters.— My bones are not so tender as hers, and I am resolved to occupy her apartment to-night, that I may judge how hard the couch is that love can soften."

"Your lordship may choose what penance you please," said Ravenswood; "but I assure you, I should expect my old servant to hang himself, or throw himself from the battlements, should your lordship visit him so unexpectedly — I do assure you, we are totally and literally unprovided."

But his declaration only brought from his noble patron an assurance of his own total indifference as to every species of accommodation, and his determination to see the Tower of Wolf's Crag. His ancestor, he said, had been feasted there, when he went forward with the then Lord Ravenswood to the fatal battle of Flodden, in which they both fell. Thus hard pressed, the Master offered to ride forward to get matters put in such preparation as time and circumstances admitted; but the Marquis protested his kinsman must afford him his company, and would only consent that an avant-courier should carry to the destined Seneschal, Caleb Balderstone, the unexpected news of this invasion.

The Master of Ravenswood soon after accompanied the Marquis in his carriage, as the latter had proposed; and when they became better acquainted in the progress of the journey, his noble relation explained the very liberal views which he entertained for his relation's preferment, in case of the success of his own political schemes. They related to a secret, and highly important commission be-

yond sea, which could only be intrusted to a person of rank, talent, and perfect confidence, and which, as it required great trust and reliance on the envoy employed, could not but prove both honourable and advantageous to him. We need not enter into the nature and purpose of this commission, farther than to acquaint our readers that the charge was in prospect highly acceptable to the Master of Ravenswood, who hailed with pleasure the hope of emerging from his present state of indigence and inaction, into independence and honourable exertion.

While he listened thus eagerly to the details with which the Marquis now thought it necessary to intrust him, the messenger who had been dispatched to the Tower of Wolf's Crag, returned with Caleb Balderstone's humble duty, and an assurance that "a' should be in seemly order, sic as the hurry of time permitted, to receive their lordships as it behoved."

Ravenswood was too well accustomed to his Seneschal's mode of acting and speaking, to hope much from this confident assurance. He knew that Caleb acted upon the principle of the Spanish generals, in the campaign of——, who, much to the perplexity of the Prince of Orange, their commander-in-chief, used to report their troops as full in number, and possessed of all necessary points of equipment, not considering it consistent with their dignity, or the honour of Spain, to confess any deficiency either in men or munition, until the want of both was unavoidably discovered in the day of battle. Accordingly, Ravenswood thought it necessary to give the Marquis some hint, that the fair assurance which they had just received from Caleb, did not by any

means insure them against a very indifferent reception.

"You do yourself injustice, Master," said the Marquis, "or you wish to surprise me agreeably. From this window I see a great light in the direction where, if I remember aright, Wolf's Crag lies; and, to judge from the splendour which the old Tower sheds around it, the preparations for our reception must be of no ordinary description. I remember your father putting the same deception on me, when we went to the Tower for a few days' hawking, about twenty years since, and yet we spent our time as jollily at Wolf's Crag as we could have done at my own hunting seat at B——."

"Your lordship, I fear, will experience that the faculty of the present proprietor to entertain his friends is greatly abridged," said Ravenswood; "the will, I need hardly say, remains the same. But I am as much at a loss as your lordship to account for so strong and brilliant a light as is now above Wolf's Crag, — the windows of the Tower are few and narrow, and those of the lower story are hidden from us by the walls of the court. I cannot conceive that any illumination of an ordinary nature could afford such a blaze of light."

The mystery was soon explained; for the cavalcade almost instantly halted, and the voice of Caleb Balderstone was heard at the coach window, exclaiming, in accents broken by grief and fear, "Och, gentlemen — Och, my gude lords — Och, haud to the right! — Wolf's Crag is burning, bower and ha' — a' the rich plenishing outside and inside — a' the fine graith, pictures, tapestries, needle-wark, hangings, and other decorements — a' in a bleeze, as if they were nae mair than sae mony peats, or as

muckle peas-strae! Haud to the right, gentlemen, I implore ye — there is some sma' provision making at Lucky Sma'trash's — but O, wae for this night, and wae for me that lives to see it!"

Ravenswood was at first stunned by this new and unexpected calamity; but after a moment's recollection, he sprang from the carriage, and hastily bidding his noble kinsman good-night, was about to ascend the hill towards the castle, the broad and full conflagration of which now flung forth a high column of red light, that flickered far to seaward upon the dashing waves of the ocean.

"Take a horse, Master," exclaimed the Marquis, greatly affected by this additional misfortune, so unexpectedly heaped upon his young protegé; "and give me my ambling palfrey; — and haste forward, you knaves, to see what can be done to save the furniture, or to extinguish the fire — ride, you knaves, for your lives!"

The attendants bustled together, and began to strike their horses with the spur, and call upon Caleb to show them the road. But the voice of that careful Seneschal was heard above the tumult, "O stop — sirs, stop — turn bridle, for the luve of mercy — add not loss of lives to the loss of warld's gear! — Thirty barrels of powther, landed out of a Dunkirk dogger in the auld lord's time — a' in the vau'ts of the auld tower, — the fire canna be far aff it, I trow — Lord's sake, to the right, lads — to the right — let's pit the hill atween us and peril, — a wap wi' a corner-stane o' Wolf's Crag wad defy the doctor!"

It will readily be supposed that this annunciation hurried the Marquis and his attendants into the route which Caleb prescribed, dragging Ravens-

wood along with them, although there was much in the matter which he could not possibly comprehend. "Gunpowder!" he exclaimed, laying hold of Caleb, who in vain endeavoured to escape from him, "what gunpowder? How any quantity of powder could be in Wolf's Crag without my knowledge, I cannot possibly comprehend."

"But I can," interrupted the Marquis, whispering him, "I can comprehend it thoroughly — for God's sake, ask him no more questions at present."

"There it is, now," said Caleb, extricating himself from his master, and adjusting his dress, "your honour will believe his lordship's honourable testimony — His lordship minds weel, how, in the year that him they ca'd King Willie died" ——

"Hush! hush, my good friend!" said the Marquis; "I shall satisfy your master upon that subject."

"And the people at Wolf's-hope" — said Ravenswood, "did none of them come to your assistance before the flame got so high?"

"Ay did they, mony ane of them, the rapscallions!" said Caleb; "but truly I was in nae hurry to let them into the Tower, where there were so much plate and valuables."

"Confound you for an impudent liar!" said Ravenswood, in uncontrollable ire, "there was not a single ounce of" ——

"Forby," said the butler, most irreverently raising his voice to a pitch which drowned his master's, "the fire made fast on us, owing to the store of tapestry and carved timmer in the banqueting ha', and the loons ran like scauded rats sae sune as they heard of the gunpouther."

"I do entreat," said the Marquis to Ravenswood, "you will ask him no more questions."

"Only one, my lord — What has become of poor Mysie?"

"Mysie?" said Caleb, "I had nae time to look about ony Mysie — she's in the tower, I'se warrant, biding her awful doom."

"By heaven!" said Ravenswood, "I do not understand all this! The life of a faithful old creature is at stake — my lord, I will be withheld no longer — I will at least ride up, and see whether the danger is as imminent as this old fool pretends."

"Weel, then, as I live by bread," said Caleb, "Mysie is weel and safe. I saw her out of the castle before I left it mysell. Was I ganging to forget an auld fellow-servant?"

"What made you tell me the contrary this moment?" said his master.

"Did I tell you the contrary?" said Caleb; "then I maun hae been dreaming surely, or this awsome night has turned my judgment — but safe she is, and ne'er a living soul in the castle, a' the better for them — they wad have gotten an unco heezy."

The Master of Ravenswood, upon this assurance being solemnly reiterated, and notwithstanding his extreme wish to witness the last explosion, which was to ruin to the ground the mansion of his fathers, suffered himself to be dragged onward towards the village of Wolf's-hope, where not only the change-house, but that of our well-known friend the cooper, were all prepared for reception of himself and his noble guest, with a liberality of provision which requires some explanation.

We omitted to mention in its place, that Lockhard, having fished out the truth concerning the mode by which Caleb had obtained the supplies for his banquet, the Lord Keeper, amused with the in-

cident, and desirous at the time to gratify Ravenswood, had recommended the cooper of Wolf's-hope to the official situation under government, the prospect of which had reconciled him to the loss of his wild-fowl. Mr. Girder's preferment had occasioned a pleasing surprise to old Caleb; for when, some days after his master's departure, he found himself absolutely compelled, by some necessary business, to visit the fishing hamlet, and was gliding like a ghost past the door of the cooper, for fear of being summoned to give some account of the progress of the solicitation in his favour, or, more probably, that the inmates might upbraid him with the false hope he had held out upon the subject, he heard himself, not without some apprehension, summoned at once in treble, tenor, and bass,—a trio performed by the voices of Mrs. Girder, old Dame Loup-the-dike, and the goodman of the dwelling—"Mr. Caleb—Mr. Caleb—Mr. Caleb Balderstone! I hope ye arena ganging dry-lipped by our door, and we sae muckle indebted to you?"

This might be said ironically as well as in earnest. Caleb augured the worst, turned a deaf ear to the trio aforesaid, and was moving doggedly on, his ancient castor pulled over his brows, and his eyes bent on the ground, as if to count the flinty pebbles with which the rude pathway was causewayed. But on a sudden he found himself surrounded in his progress, like a stately merchantman in the Gut of Gibraltar (I hope the ladies will excuse the tarpaulin phrase) by three Algerine galleys.

"Gude guide us, Mr. Balderstone!" said Mrs. Girder.

"Wha wad hae thought it of an auld and kend friend!" said the mother.

"And no sae muckle as stay to receive our thanks," said the cooper himself, "and frae the like o' me that seldom offers them! I am sure I hope there's nae ill seed sawn between us, Mr. Balderstone — ony man that has said to ye, I am no gratefu' for the situation of Queen's cooper, let me hae a whample at him wi' mine eatche[1] — that's a'."

"My good friends — my dear friends," said Caleb, still doubting how the certainty of the matter might stand, "what needs a' this ceremony? — ane tries to serve their friends, and sometimes they may happen to prosper, and sometimes to misgie — naething I care to be fashed wi' less than thanks — I never could bide them."

"Faith, Mr. Balderstone, ye suld hae been fashed wi' few o' mine," said the downright man of staves and hoops, "if I had only your gude-will to thank ye for — I suld e'en hae set the guse, and the wild-deukes, and the runlet of sack, to balance that account. Gude-will, man, is a geizen'd tub, that hauds in nae liquor — but gude deed's like the cask, tight, round, and sound, that will haud liquor for the king."

"Have ye no heard of our letter," said the mother-in-law, "making our John the Queen's cooper for certain? — and scarce a chield that had ever hammered gird upon tub but was applying for it?"

"Have I heard!!!" said Caleb, (who now found how the wind set,) with an accent of exceeding contempt at the doubt expressed — "Have I heard, quo' she!!!" — and as he spoke, he changed his shambling, skulking, dodging pace, into a manly and authoritative step, re-adjusted his cocked hat,

[1] *Anglicé*, adze.

and suffered his brow to emerge from under it in all the pride of aristocracy, like the sun from behind a cloud.

"To be sure, he canna but hae heard," said the good woman.

"Ay, to be sure, it's impossible but I should," said Caleb; "and sae I'll be the first to kiss ye, joe, and wish you, cooper, much joy of your preferment, naething doubting but ye ken wha are your friends, and *have* helped ye, and *can* help ye. I thought it right to look a wee strange upon it at first," added Caleb, "just to see if ye were made of the right mettle — but ye ring true, lad, ye ring true!"

So saying, with a most lordly air he kissed the women, and abandoned his hand, with an air of serene patronage, to the hearty shake of Mr. Girder's horn-hard palm. Upon this complete, and to Caleb most satisfactory, information, he did not, it may readily be believed, hesitate to accept an invitation to a solemn feast, to which were invited, not only all the *notables* of the village, but even his ancient antagonist, Mr. Dingwall himself. At this festivity he was, of course, the most welcome and most honoured guest; and so well did he ply the company with stories of what he could do with his master, his master with the Lord Keeper, the Lord Keeper with the Council, and the Council with the King, that before the company dismissed, (which was, indeed, rather at an early hour than a late one,) every man of note in the village was ascending to the top-gallant of some ideal preferment by the ladder of ropes which Caleb had presented to their imagination. Nay, the cunning butler regained in that moment, not only all the influence he possessed formerly over the villagers, when the bar-

onial family which he served were at the proudest, but acquired even an accession of importance. The writer — the very attorney himself — such is the thirst of preferment — felt the force of the attraction, and taking an opportunity to draw Caleb into a corner, spoke, with affectionate regret, of the declining health of the sheriff-clerk of the county.

"An excellent man — a most valuable man, Mr. Caleb — but fat sall I say! — we are peer feckless bodies — here the day, and awa by cock-screech the morn — and if he failzies, there maun be somebody in his place — and gif that ye could airt it my way, I sall be thankful, man — a gluve stuffed wi' gowd nobles — an' hark ye, man, something canny till yoursell — and the Wolf's-hope carles to settle kindly wi' the Master of Ravenswood — that is, Lord Ravenswood — God bless his lordship!"

A smile, and a hearty squeeze by the hand, was the suitable answer to this overture — and Caleb made his escape from the jovial party, in order to avoid committing himself by any special promises.

"The Lord be gude to me," said Caleb, when he found himself in the open air, and at liberty to give vent to the self-exultation with which he was, as it were, distended; "did ever ony man see sic a set of green-gaislings! — the very pick-maws and solan-geese outby yonder at the Bass hae ten times their sense! — God, an I had been the Lord High Commissioner to the Estates o' Parliament, they couldna hae beflumm'd me mair — and, to speak Heaven's truth, I could hardly hae beflumm'd them better neither! But the writer — ha! ha! ha! — ah, ha! ha! ha! mercy on me, that I suld live in my auld days to gie the gang-by to the very writer! — Sheriff-clerk!!! — But I hae an auld account to

settle wi' the carle; and to make amends for byganes, the office shall just cost him as much time-serving and tide-serving, as if he were to get it in gude earnest — of whilk there is sma' appearance, unless the Master learns mair the ways of this warld, whilk it is muckle to be doubted that he never will do." —

CHAPTER V.

> Why flames yon far summit — why shoot to the blast
> Those embers, like stars from the firmament cast? —
> 'Tis the fire-shower of ruin, all dreadfully driven
> From thine eyry, that beacons the darkness of Heaven.
>
> CAMPBELL.

THE circumstances announced in the conclusion of the last chapter, will account for the ready and cheerful reception of the Marquis of A—— and the Master of Ravenswood in the village of Wolf's-hope. In fact, Caleb had no sooner announced the conflagration of the tower, than the whole hamlet were upon foot to hasten to extinguish the flames. And although that zealous adherent diverted their zeal by intimating the formidable contents of the subterranean apartments, yet the check only turned their assiduity into another direction. Never had there been such slaughtering of capons, and fat geese, and barn-door fowls, — never such boiling of *reested* hams, — never such making of car-cakes and sweet scones, Selkirk bannocks, cookies, and petticoat-tails, — delicacies little known to the present generation. (*c*) Never had there been such a tapping of barrels, and such uncorking of greybeards, in the village of Wolf's-hope. All the inferior houses were thrown open for the reception of the Marquis's dependants, who came, it was thought, as precursors of the shower of preferment, which hereafter was to leave the rest of Scotland dry, in order

to distil its rich dews on the village of Wolf's-hope under Lammermoor. The minister put in his claim to have the guests of distinction lodged at the Manse, having his eye, it was thought, upon a neighbouring preferment, where the incumbent was sickly; but Mr. Balderstone destined that honour to the cooper, his wife, and wife's mother, who danced for joy at the preference thus assigned them.

Many a beck and many a bow welcomed these noble guests to as good entertainment as persons of such rank could set before such visitors; and the old dame, who had formerly lived in Ravenswood Castle, and knew, as she said, the ways of the nobility, was in no whit wanting in arranging matters, as well as circumstances permitted, according to the etiquette of the times. The cooper's house was so roomy, that each guest had his separate retiring room, to which they were ushered with all due ceremony, while the plentiful supper was in the act of being placed upon the table.

Ravenswood no sooner found himself alone, than, impelled by a thousand feelings, he left the apartment, the house, and the village, and hastily retraced his steps to the brow of the hill, which rose betwixt the village, and screened it from the tower, in order to view the final fall of the house of his fathers. Some idle boys from the hamlet had taken the same direction out of curiosity, having first witnessed the arrival of the coach-and-six and its attendants. As they ran one by one past the Master, calling to each other to "come and see the auld tower blaw up in the lift like the peelings of an ingan," he could not but feel himself moved with indignation. "And these are the sons of my father's vassals," he said — "of men bound, both by law and

gratitude, to follow our steps through battle, and fire, and flood; and now the destruction of their liege-lord's house is but a holiday's sight to them!"

These exasperating reflections were partly expressed in the acrimony with which he exclaimed, on feeling himself pulled by the cloak, — "What do you want, you dog?"

"I am a dog, and an auld dog too," answered Caleb, for it was he who had taken the freedom, "and I am like to get a dog's wages — but it does not signification a pinch of sneeshing, for I am ower auld a dog to learn new tricks, or to follow a new master."

As he spoke, Ravenswood attained the ridge of the hill from which Wolf's Crag was visible; the flames had entirely sunk down, and, to his great surprise, there was only a dusky reddening upon the clouds immediately over the castle, which seemed the reflection of the embers of the sunken fire.

"The place cannot have blown up," said the Master; "we must have heard the report — if a quarter of the gunpowder was there you tell me of, it would have been heard twenty miles off."

"It's very like it wad," said Balderstone, composedly.

"Then the fire cannot have reached the vaults?"

"It's like no," answered Caleb, with the same impenetrable gravity.

"Hark ye, Caleb," said his master, "this grows a little too much for my patience. I must go and examine how matters stand at Wolf's Crag myself."

"Your honour is ganging to gang nae sic gate," said Caleb, firmly.

"And why not?" said Ravenswood, sharply; "who or what shall prevent me?"

"Even I mysell," said Caleb, with the same determination.

"You, Balderstone!" replied the Master; "you are forgetting yourself, I think."

"But I think no," said Balderstone; "for I can just tell ye a' about the castle on this knowe-head as weel as if ye were at it. Only dinna pit yoursell into a kippage, and expose yoursell before the weans, or before the Marquis, when ye gang down-by."

"Speak out, you old fool," replied his master, "and let me know the best and the worst at once."

"Ou, the best and the warst is, just that the tower is standing hail and feir, as safe and as empty as when ye left it."

"Indeed! — and the fire?" said Ravenswood.

"Not a gleed of fire, then, except the bit kindling peat, and maybe a spunk in Mysie's cutty-pipe," replied Caleb.

"But the flame?" demanded Ravenswood; "the broad blaze which might have been seen ten miles off — what occasioned that?"

"Hout awa! it's an auld saying and a true, —

> Little's the light
> Will be seen far in a mirk night.

A wheen fern and horse litter that I fired in the court-yard, after sending back the loun of a footman; and, to speak heaven's truth, the next time that ye send or bring ony body here, let them be gentles allenarly, without ony fremd servants, like that chield Lockhard, to be gledging and gleeing about, and looking upon the wrang side of ane's

housekeeping, to the discredit of the family, and forcing ane to damn their souls wi' telling ae lee after another faster than I can count them — I wad rather set fire to the tower in gude earnest, and burn it ower my ain head into the bargain, or I see the family dishonoured in the sort."

"Upon my word, I am infinitely obliged by the proposal, Caleb," said his master, scarce able to restrain his laughter, though rather angry at the same time. "But the gunpowder? — is there such a thing in the tower? — The Marquis seemed to know of it."

"The pouther — ha! ha! ha! — the Marquis — ha! ha! ha!" replied Caleb; "if your honour were to brain me, I behooved to laugh — the Marquis — the pouther! — was it there? ay, it was there. Did he ken o't? — my certie! the Marquis kend o't, and it was the best o' the game; for, when I couldna pacify your honour wi' a' that I could say, I aye threw out a word mair about the gunpouther, and garr'd the Marquis tak the job in his ain hand."

"But you have not answered my question," said the Master, impatiently; "how came the powder there, and where is it now?"

"Ou, it came there, an ye maun needs ken," said Caleb, looking mysteriously, and whispering, "when there was like to be a wee bit rising here; and the Marquis, and a' the great lords of the north, were a' in it, and mony a gudely gun and broadsword were ferried ower frae Dunkirk forby the pouther — awfu' wark we had getting them into the tower under cloud o' night, for ye maun think it wasna every body could be trusted wi' sic kittle jobs — But if ye will gae hame to your supper, I will tell you a' about it as ye gang down."

"And these wretched boys," said Ravenswood, "is it your pleasure they are to sit there all night, to wait for the blowing up of a tower that is not even on fire?"

"Surely not, if it is your honour's pleasure that they suld gang hame; although," added Caleb, "it wadna do them a grain's damage — they wad screigh less the next day, and sleep the sounder at e'en — But just as your honour likes."

Stepping accordingly towards the urchins who manned the knolls near which they stood, Caleb informed them, in an authoritative tone, that their Honours Lord Ravenswood and the Marquis of A—— had given orders that the tower was not to blow up till next day at noon. The boys dispersed upon this comfortable assurance. One or two, however, followed Caleb for more information, particularly the urchin whom he had cheated while officiating as turnspit, who screamed, "Mr. Balderstone! Mr. Balderstone! than the castle's gane out like an auld wife's spunk?"

"To be sure it is, callant," said the butler; "do ye think the castle of as great a lord as Lord Ravenswood wad continue in a bleeze, and him standing looking on wi' his ain very een? — It's aye right," continued Caleb, shaking off his ragged page, and closing in to his master, "to train up weans, as the wise man says, in the way they should go, and, aboon a', to teach them respect to their superiors."

"But all this while, Caleb, you have never told me what became of the arms and powder," said Ravenswood.

"Why, as for the arms," said Caleb, "it was just like the bairn's rhyme —

'Some gaed east, and some gaed west,
And some gaed to the craw's nest:'

And for the pouther, I e'en changed it, as occasion served, with the skippers o' Dutch luggers and French vessels, for gin and brandy, and it served the house mony a year — a gude swap too, between what cheereth the soul of man and that which dingeth it clean out of his body; forby, I keepit a wheen pounds of it for yoursell when ye wanted to take the pleasure o' shooting — whiles, in these latter days, I wad hardly hae kend else whar to get pouther for your pleasure. — And now that your anger is ower, sir, wasna that weel managed o' me, and arena ye far better sorted doun yonder, than ye could hae been in your ain auld ruins upby yonder, as the case stands wi' us now? — the mair's the pity."

"I believe you may be right, Caleb; but, before burning down my castle, either in jest or in earnest," said Ravenswood, "I think I had a right to be in the secret."

"Fie for shame, your honour!" replied Caleb; "it fits an auld carle like me weel eneugh to tell lees for the credit of the family, but it wadna beseem the like o' your honour's sell; besides, young folk are no judicious — they cannot make the maist of a bit figment. Now this fire — for a fire it sall be, if I suld burn the auld stable to make it mair feasible — this fire, besides that it will be an excuse for asking ony thing we want through the country, or doun at the haven — this fire will settle mony things on an honourable footing for the family's credit, that cost me telling twenty daily lees to a wheen idle chaps and queans, and, what's waur, without gaining credence."

"That was hard indeed, Caleb; but I do not see how this fire should help your veracity or your credit."

"There it is now!" said Caleb; "wasna I saying that young folk had a green judgment? — How suld it help me, quotha? — it will be a creditable apology for the honour of the family for this score of years to come, if it is weel guided. Where's the family pictures? says ae meddling body — the great fire at Wolf's Crag, answers I. Where's the family plate? says another — the great fire, says I; wha was to think of plate, when life and limb were in danger? — Where's the wardrobe and the linens? — where's the tapestries and the decorements? — beds of state, twilts, pands and testors, napery and broidered wark? — The fire — the fire — the fire. Guide the fire weel, and it will serve ye for a' that ye suld have and have not — and, in some sort, a gude excuse is better than the things themselves; for they maun crack and wear out, and be consumed by time, whereas a gude offcome, prudently and creditably handled, may serve a nobleman and his family, Lord kens how lang!"

Ravenswood was too well acquainted with his butler's pertinacity and self-opinion, to dispute the point with him any farther. Leaving Caleb, therefore, to the enjoyment of his own successful ingenuity, he returned to the hamlet, where he found the Marquis and the good women of the mansion under some anxiety — the former on account of his absence, the others for the discredit their cookery might sustain by the delay of the supper. All were now at ease, and heard with pleasure that the fire at the castle had burned out of itself without reaching the vaults, which was the only information that

Ravenswood thought it proper to give in public concerning the event of his butler's stratagem.

They sat down to an excellent supper. No invitation could prevail on Mr. and Mrs. Girder, even in their own house, to sit down at table with guests of such high quality. They remained standing in the apartment, and acted the part of respectful and careful attendants on the company. Such were the manners of the time. The elder dame, confident through her age and connexion with the Ravenswood family, was less scrupulously ceremonious. She played a mixed part betwixt that of the hostess of an inn, and the mistress of a private house, who receives guests above her own degree. She recommended, and even pressed, what she thought best, and was herself easily entreated to take a moderate share of the good cheer, in order to encourage her guests by her own example. Often she interrupted herself, to express her regret that "my Lord did not eat — that the Master was pyking a bare bane — that, to be sure, there was naething there fit to set before their honours — that Lord Allan, rest his saul, used to like a pouthered guse, and said it was Latin for a tass o' brandy — that the brandy came frae France direct; for, for a' the English laws and gaugers, the Wolf's-hope brigs hadna forgotten the gate to Dunkirk."

Here the cooper admonished his mother-in-law with his elbow, which procured him the following special notice in the progress of her speech.

"Ye needna be dunshin that gate, John," continued the old lady; "naebody says that *ye* ken whar the brandy comes frae; and it wadna be fitting ye should, and you the queen's cooper; and what signifies't," continued she, addressing Lord

Ravenswood, "to king, queen, or keiser, whar an auld wife like me buys her pickle sneeshin, or her drap brandy-wine, to haud her heart up?"

Having thus extricated herself from her supposed false step, Dame Loup-the-dyke proceeded, during the rest of the evening, to supply, with great animation, and very little assistance from her guests, the funds necessary for the support of the conversation, until, declining any further circulation of their glass, her guests requested her permission to retire to their apartments.

The Marquis occupied the chamber of dais, which, in every house above the rank of a mere cottage, was kept sacred for such high occasions as the present. The modern finishing with plaster was then unknown, and tapestry was confined to the houses of the nobility and superior gentry. The cooper, therefore, who was a man of some vanity, as well as some wealth, had imitated the fashion observed by the inferior landholders and clergy, who usually ornamented their state apartments with hangings of a sort of stamped leather, manufactured in the Netherlands, garnished with trees and animals executed in copper foil, and with many a pithy sentence of morality, which, although couched in Low Dutch, were perhaps as much attended to in practice as if written in broad Scotch. The whole had somewhat of a gloomy aspect; but the fire, composed of old pitch-barrel staves, blazed merrily up the chimney; the bed was decorated with linen of most fresh and dazzling whiteness, which had never before been used, and might, perhaps, have never been used at all, but for this high occasion. On the toilette beside, stood an old-fashioned mirror, in a fillagree frame, part of the dispersed finery of the neighbour-

ing castle. It was flanked by a long-necked bottle of Florence wine, by which stood a glass nearly as tall, resembling in shape that which Teniers usually places in the hands of his own portrait, when he paints himself as mingling in the revels of a country village. To counterbalance those foreign centinels, there mounted guard on the other side of the mirror two stout warders of Scottish lineage; a jug, namely, of double ale, which held a Scotch pint, and a quegh, or bicker, of ivory and ebony, hooped with silver, the work of John Girder's own hands, and the pride of his heart. Besides these preparations against thirst, there was a goodly diet-loaf, or sweet cake; so that, with such auxiliaries, the apartment seemed victualled against a siege of two or three days.

It only remains to say, that the Marquis's valet was in attendance, displaying his master's brocaded night-gown, and richly embroidered velvet cap, lined and faced with Brussels lace, upon a huge leathern easy chair, wheeled round so as to have the full advantage of the comfortable fire which we have already mentioned. We therefore commit that eminent person to his night's repose, trusting he profited by the ample preparations made for his accommodation,—preparations which we have mentioned in detail, as illustrative of ancient Scottish manners.

It is not necessary we should be equally minute in describing the sleeping apartment of the Master of Ravenswood, which was that usually occupied by the goodman and goodwife themselves. It was comfortably hung with a sort of warm-coloured worsted, manufactured in Scotland, approaching in texture to what is now called shaloon. A staring picture of John Girder himself ornamented this

dormitory, painted by a starving Frenchman, who had, God knows how or why, strolled over from Flushing or Dunkirk to Wolf's-hope in a smuggling dogger. The features were, indeed, those of the stubborn, opinionative, yet sensible artisan, but Monsieur had contrived to throw a French grace into the look and manner, so utterly inconsistent with the dogged gravity of the original, that it was impossible to look at it without laughing. John and his family, however, piqued themselves not a little upon this picture, and were proportionably censured by the neighbourhood, who pronounced that the cooper, in sitting for the same, and yet more in presuming to hang it up in his bedchamber, had exceeded his privilege as the richest man of the village; at once stept beyond the bounds of his own rank, and encroached upon those of the superior orders; and, in fine, had been guilty of a very overweening act of vanity and presumption. Respect for the memory of my deceased friend, Mr. Richard Tinto, has obliged me to treat this matter at some length; but I spare the reader his prolix, though curious observations, as well upon the character of the French school, as upon the state of painting in Scotland, at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

The other preparations of the Master's sleeping apartment, were similar to those in the chamber of dais.

At the usual early hour of that period, the Marquis of A—— and his kinsman prepared to resume their journey. This could not be done without an ample breakfast, in which cold meat and hot meat, and oatmeal flummery, wine and spirits, and milk varied by every possible mode of preparation, evinced

the same desire to do honour to their guests, which had been shown by the hospitable owners of the mansion upon the evening before. All the bustle of preparation for departure now resounded through Wolf's-hope. There was paying of bills and shaking of hands, and saddling of horses, and harnessing of carriages, and distributing of drink-money. The Marquis left a broad piece for the gratification of John Girder's household, which he, the said John, was for some time disposed to convert to his own use; Dingwall the writer assuring him he was justified in so doing, seeing he was the disburser of those expenses which were the occasion of the gratification. But, notwithstanding this legal authority, John could not find in his heart to dim the splendour of his late hospitality, by pocketing any thing in the nature of a gratuity. He only assured his menials he would consider them as a damned ungrateful pack, if they bought a gill of brandy elsewhere than out of his own stores; and as the drink-money was likely to go to its legitimate use, he comforted himself that, in this manner, the Marquis's donative would, without any impeachment of credit and character, come ultimately into his own exclusive possession.

While arrangements were making for departure, Ravenswood made blithe the heart of his ancient butler, by informing him, cautiously however, (for he knew Caleb's warmth of imagination,) of the probable change which was about to take place in his fortunes. He deposited with Balderstone, at the same time, the greater part of his slender funds, with an assurance, which he was obliged to reiterate more than once, that he himself had sufficient supplies in certain prospect. He, therefore, enjoined

Caleb, as he valued his favour, to desist from all farther manœuvres against the inhabitants of Wolf's-hope, their cellars, poultry-yards, and substance whatsoever. In this prohibition, the old domestic acquiesced more readily than his master expected.

"It was doubtless," he said, "a shame, a discredit, and a sin, to harry the puir creatures, when the family were in circumstances to live honourably on their ain means; and there might be wisdom," he added, "in giving them a whiles breathing time at any rate, that they might be the more readily brought forward upon his honour's future occasions."

This matter being settled, and having taken an affectionate farewell of his old domestic, the Master rejoined his noble relative, who was now ready to enter his carriage. The two landladies, old and young, having received in all kindly greeting, a kiss from each of their noble guests, stood simpering at the door of their house, as the coach-and-six, followed by its train of clattering horsemen, thundered out of the village. John Girder also stood upon his threshold, now looking at his honoured right hand, which had been so lately shaken by a marquis and a lord, and now giving a glance into the interior of his mansion, which manifested all the disarray of the late revel, as if balancing the distinction which he had attained with the expenses of the entertainment.

At length he opened his oracular jaws. "Let every man and woman here set about their ain business, as if there was nae sic thing as marquis or master, duke or drake, laird or lord, in this world. Let the house be redd up, the broken meat set by, and if there is ony thing totally uneatable, let it be gien to the puir folk; and, gudemother and wife, I

hae just ae thing to entreat ye, that ye will never speak to me a single word, good or bad, anent a' this nonsense wark, but keep a' your cracks about it to yoursells and your kimmers, for my head is weel-nigh dung donnart wi' it already."

As John's authority was tolerably absolute, all departed to their usual occupations, leaving him to build castles in the air, if he had a mind, upon the court favour which he had acquired by the expenditure of his worldly substance.

CHAPTER VI.

> Why, now I have Dame Fortune by the forelock,
> And if she escapes my grasp, the fault is mine;
> He that hath buffeted with stern adversity,
> Best knows to shape his course to favouring breezes.
>
> *Old Play.*

Our travellers reached Edinburgh without any farther adventure, and the Master of Ravenswood, as had been previously settled, took up his abode with his noble friend.

In the meantime, the political crisis which had been expected, took place, and the Tory party obtained, in the Scottish, as in the English councils of Queen Anne, a short-lived ascendency, of which it is not our business to trace either the cause or consequences. Suffice it to say, that it affected the different political parties according to the nature of their principles. In England, many of the High Church party, with Harley, afterwards Earl of Oxford, at their head, affected to separate their principles from those of the Jacobites, and, on that account, obtained the denomination of Whimsicals. The Scottish High Church party, on the contrary, or, as they termed themselves, the Cavaliers, were more consistent, if not so prudent, in their politics, and viewed all the changes now made, as preparatory to calling to the throne, upon the queen's demise, her brother, the Chevalier de St. George. Those who had suffered in his service, now entertained the most unreason-

able hopes, not only of indemnification, but of vengeance upon their political adversaries; while families attached to the Whig interest, saw nothing before them but a renewal of the hardships they had undergone during the reigns of Charles the Second and his brother, and a retaliation of the confiscation which had been inflicted upon the Jacobites during that of King William.

But the most alarmed at the change of system, was that prudential set of persons, some of whom are found in all governments, but who abound in a provincial administration like that of Scotland during the period, and who are what Cromwell called waiters upon Providence, or, in other words, uniform adherents to the party who are uppermost. Many of these hastened to read their recantation to the Marquis of A——; and, as it was easily seen that he took a deep interest in the affairs of his kinsman, the Master of Ravenswood, they were the first to suggest measures for retrieving at least a part of his property, and for restoring him in blood against his father's attainder.

Old Lord Turntippet professed to be one of the most anxious for the success of these measures; for "it grieved him to the very saul," he said, "to see so brave a young gentleman, of sic auld and undoubted nobility, and, what was mair than a' that, a bluid relation of the Marquis of A——, the man whom," he swore, "he honoured most upon the face of the yearth, brought to so severe a pass. For his ain puir peculiar," as he said, "and to contribute something to the rehabilitation of sae auld ane house," the said Turntippet sent in three family pictures lacking the frames, and six high-backed chairs, with worked Turkey cushions, having the crest of Ravens-

wood broidered thereon, without charging a penny either of the principal or interest they had cost him, when he bought them, sixteen years before, at a roup of the furniture of Lord Ravenswood's lodgings in the Canongate.

Much more to Lord Turntippet's dismay than to his surprise, although he affected to feel more of the latter than the former, the Marquis received his gift very drily, and observed, that his lordship's restitution, if he expected it to be received by the Master of Ravenswood and his friends, must comprehend a pretty large farm, which, having been mortgaged to Turntippet for a very inadequate sum, he had contrived, during the confusion of the family affairs, and by means well understood by the lawyers of that period, to acquire to himself in absolute property.

The old time-serving lord winced excessively under this requisition, protesting to God, that he saw no occasion the lad could have for the instant possession of the land, seeing he would doubtless now recover the bulk of his estate from Sir William Ashton, to which he was ready to contribute by every means in his power, as was just and reasonable; and finally declaring, that he was willing to settle the land on the young gentleman, after his own natural demise.

But all these excuses availed nothing, and he was compelled to disgorge the property, on receiving back the sum for which it had been mortgaged. Having no other means of making peace with the higher powers, he returned home sorrowful and malecontent, complaining to his confidents, "that every mutation or change in the state had hitherto been productive of some sma' advantage to him in his

ain quiet affairs; but that the present had (pize upon it!) cost him one of the best pen-feathers o' his wing."

Similar measures were threatened against others who had profited by the wreck of the fortune of Ravenswood; and Sir William Ashton, in particular, was menaced with an appeal to the House of Peers against the judicial sentences under which he held the Castle and Barony of Ravenswood. With him, however, the Master, as well for Lucy's sake as on account of the hospitality he had received from him, felt himself under the necessity of proceeding with great candour. He wrote to the late Lord Keeper, for he no longer held that office, stating frankly the engagement which existed between him and Miss Ashton, requesting his permission for their union, and assuring him of his willingness to put the settlement of all matters between them upon such a footing, as Sir William himself should think favourable.

The same messenger was charged with a letter to Lady Ashton, deprecating any cause of displeasure which the Master might unintentionally have given her, enlarging upon his attachment to Miss Ashton, and the length to which it had proceeded, and conjuring the lady, as a Douglas in nature as well as in name, generously to forget ancient prejudices and misunderstandings; and to believe that the family had acquired a friend, and she herself a respectful and attached humble servant, in him who subscribed himself Edgar, Master of Ravenswood.

A third letter Ravenswood addressed to Lucy, and the messenger was instructed to find some secret and secure means of delivering it into her own hands. It contained the strongest protestations of continued af-

fection, and dwelt upon the approaching change of the writer's fortunes, as chiefly valuable by tending to remove the impediments to their union. He related the steps he had taken to overcome the prejudices of her parents, and especially of her mother, and expressed his hope they might prove effectual. If not, he still trusted that his absence from Scotland upon an important and honourable mission might give time for prejudices to die away; while he hoped and trusted Miss Ashton's constancy, on which he had the most implicit reliance, would baffle any effort that might be used to divert her attachment. Much more there was, which, however interesting to the lovers themselves, would afford the reader neither interest nor information. To each of these three letters the Master of Ravenswood received an answer, but by different means of conveyance, and certainly couched in very different styles.

Lady Ashton answered his letter by his own messenger, who was not allowed to remain at Ravenswood a moment longer than she was engaged in penning these lines.

"*For the hand of Mr. Ravenswood of Wolf's Crag — These:*

"SIR, UNKNOWN, — I have received a letter, signed Edgar, Master of Ravenswood, concerning the writer whereof I am uncertain, seeing that the honours of such a family were forfeited for high treason in the person of Allan, late Lord Ravenswood. Sir, if you shall happen to be the person so subscribing yourself, you will please to know, that I claim the full interest of a parent in Miss Lucy Ashton, which I have disposed of irrevocably in behalf of a worthy person. And, sir, were this other-

wise, I would not listen to a proposal from you, or any of your house, seeing their hand has been uniformly held up against the freedom of the subject, and the immunities of God's kirk. Sir, it is not a flightering blink of prosperity which can change my constant opinion in this regard, seeing it has been my lot before now, like holy David, to see the wicked great in power, and flourishing like a green bay tree; nevertheless I passed, and they were not, and the place thereof knew them no more. Wishing you to lay these things to your heart for your own sake, so far as they may concern you, I pray you to take no farther notice of her, who desires to remain your unknown servant,

"MARGARET DOUGLAS,
"otherwise ASHTON."

About two days after he had received this very unsatisfactory epistle, the Master of Ravenswood, while walking up the High Street of Edinburgh, was jostled by a person, in whom, as the man pulled off his hat to make an apology, he recognised Lockhard, the confidential domestic of Sir William Ashton. The man bowed, slipt a letter into his hand, and disappeared. The packet contained four close-written folios, from which, however, as is sometimes incident to the compositions of great lawyers, little could be extracted, excepting that the writer felt himself in a very puzzling predicament.

Sir William spoke at length of his high value and regard for his dear young friend, the Master of Ravenswood, and of his very extreme high value and regard for the Marquis of A——, his very dear old friend; — he trusted that any measures that they might adopt, in which he was concerned, would be carried on with due regard to the sanc-

tity of decreets, and judgments obtained *in foro contentioso;* protesting, before men and angels, that if the law of Scotland, as declared in her supreme courts, were to undergo a reversal in the English House of Lords, the evils which would thence arise to the public would inflict a greater wound upon his heart, than any loss he might himself sustain by such irregular proceedings. He flourished much on generosity and forgiveness of mutual injuries, and hinted at the mutability of human affairs, always favourite topics with the weaker party in politics. He pathetically lamented, and gently censured, the haste which had been used in depriving him of his situation of Lord Keeper, which his experience had enabled him to fill with some advantage to the public, without so much as giving him an opportunity of explaining how far his own views of general politics might essentially differ from those now in power. He was convinced the Marquis of A—— had as sincere intentions towards the public, as himself or any man; and if, upon a conference, they could have agreed upon the measures by which it was to be pursued, his experience and his interest should have gone to support the present administration. Upon the engagement betwixt Ravenswood and his daughter, he spoke in a dry and confused manner. He regretted so premature a step as the engagement of the young people should have been taken, and conjured the Master to remember he had never given any encouragement thereunto; and observed, that, as a transaction *inter minores,* and without concurrence of his daughter's natural curators, the engagement was inept, and void in law. This precipitate measure, he added, had produced a very bad effect upon Lady Ashton's mind, which it was impossible at

present to remove. Her son, Colonel Douglas Ashton, had embraced her prejudices in the fullest extent, and it was impossible for Sir William to adopt a course disagreeable to them, without a fatal and irreconcilable breach in his family; which was not at present to be thought of. Time, the great physician, he hoped, would mend all.

In a postscript, Sir William said something more explicitly, which seemed to intimate, that rather than the law of Scotland should sustain a severe wound through his sides, by a reversal of the judgment of her supreme courts, in the case of the Barony of Ravenswood, through the intervention of what, with all submission, he must term a foreign court of appeal, he himself would extrajudicially consent to considerable sacrifices.

From Lucy Ashton, by some unknown conveyance, the Master received the following lines: —

"I received yours, but it was at the utmost risk; do not attempt to write again till better times. I am sore beset, but I will be true to my word, while the exercise of my reason is vouchsafed to me. That you are happy and prosperous is some consolation, and my situation requires it all."

The note was signed L. A.

This letter filled Ravenswood with the most lively alarm. He made many attempts, notwithstanding her prohibition, to convey letters to Miss Ashton, and even to obtain an interview; but his plans were frustrated, and he had only the mortification to learn, that anxious and effectual precautions had been taken to prevent the possibility of their correspondence. The Master was the more distressed by these circumstances, as it became im-

possible to delay his departure from Scotland, upon the important mission which had been confided to him. Before his departure, he put Sir William Ashton's letter into the hands of the Marquis of A——, who observed with a smile, that Sir William's day of grace was past, and that he had now to learn which side of the hedge the sun had got to. It was with the greatest difficulty that Ravenswood extorted from the Marquis a promise, that he would compromise the proceedings in Parliament, providing Sir William should be disposed to acquiesce in a union between him and Lucy Ashton.

"I would hardly," said the Marquis, "consent to your throwing away your birth-right in this manner, were I not perfectly confident that Lady Ashton, or Lady Douglas, or whatever she calls herself, will, as Scotchmen say, keep her threep; and that her husband dares not contradict her."

"But yet," said the Master, "I trust your lordship will consider my engagement as sacred?"

"Believe my word of honour," said the Marquis, "I would be a friend even to your follies; and having thus told you *my* opinion, I will endeavour, as occasion offers, to serve you according to your own."

The Master of Ravenswood could but thank his generous kinsman and patron, and leave him full power to act in all his affairs. He departed from Scotland upon his mission, which, it was supposed, might detain him upon the continent for some months.

CHAPTER VII.

> Was ever woman in this humour wooed?
> Was ever woman in this humour won?
> I'll have her.
>
> *Richard the Third.*

TWELVE months had passed away since the Master of Ravenswood's departure for the continent, and, although his return to Scotland had been expected in a much shorter space, yet the affairs of his mission, or, according to a prevailing report, others of a nature personal to himself, still detained him abroad. In the meantime, the altered state of affairs in Sir William Ashton's family may be gathered from the following conversation which took place betwixt Bucklaw and his confidential bottle companion and dependent, the noted Captain Craigengelt.

They were seated on either side of the huge sepulchral-looking freestone chimney in the low hall at Girnington. A wood fire blazed merrily in the grate; a round oaken table, placed between them, supported a stoup of excellent claret, two rummer glasses, and other good cheer; and yet, with all these appliances and means to boot, the countenance of the patron was dubious, doubtful, and unsatisfied, while the invention of his dependent was taxed to the utmost, to parry what he most dreaded, a fit, as he called it, of the sullens, on the part of his protector. After a long pause, only interrupted

by the devil's tattoo, which Bucklaw kept beating against the hearth with the toe of his boot, Craigengelt at last ventured to break silence. "May I be double distanced," said he, "if ever I saw a man in my life have less the air of a bridegroom! Cut me out of feather, if you have not more the look of a man condemned to be hanged!"

"My kind thanks for the compliment," replied Bucklaw; "but I suppose you think upon the predicament in which you yourself are most likely to be placed;—and pray, Captain Craigengelt, if it please your worship, why should I look merry, when I'm sad, and devilish sad too?"

"And that's what vexes me," said Craigengelt. "Here is this match, the best in the whole country, and which you were so anxious about, is on the point of being concluded, and you are as sulky as a bear that has lost its whelps."

"I do not know," answered the laird, doggedly, "whether I should conclude it or not, if it was not that I am too far forwards to leap back."

"Leap back!" exclaimed Craigengelt, with a well-assumed air of astonishment, "that would be playing the back-game with a witness! Leap back! Why, is not the girl's fortune"——

"The young lady's, if you please," said Hayston, interrupting him.

"Well, well, no disrespect meant—Will Miss Ashton's tocher not weigh against any in Lothian?"

"Granted," answered Bucklaw; "but I care not a penny for her tocher—I have enough of my own."

"And the mother, that loves you like her own child?"

"Better than some of her children, I believe,"

said Bucklaw, "or there would be little love wared on the matter."

"And Colonel Sholto Douglas Ashton, who desires the marriage above all earthly things?"

"Because," said Bucklaw, "he expects to carry the county of —— through my interest."

"And the father, who is as keen to see the match concluded, as ever I have been to win a main?"

"Ay," said Bucklaw, in the same disparaging manner, "it lies with Sir William's policy to secure the next best match, since he cannot barter his child to save the great Ravenswood estate, which the English House of Lords are about to wrench out of his clutches."

"What say you to the young lady herself?" said Craigengelt; "the finest young woman in all Scotland, one that you used to be so fond of when she was cross, and now she consents to have you, and gives up her engagement with Ravenswood, you are for jibbing — I must say, the devil's in ye, when ye neither know what you would have, nor what you would want."

"I'll tell you my meaning in a word," answered Bucklaw, getting up and walking through the room; "I want to know what the devil is the cause of Miss Ashton's changing her mind so suddenly?"

"And what need you care," said Craigengelt, "since the change is in your favour?"

"I'll tell you what it is," returned his patron, "I never knew much of that sort of fine ladies, and I believe they may be as capricious as the devil; but there is something in Miss Ashton's change, a devilish deal too sudden, and too serious for a mere flisk of her own. I'll be bound Lady Ashton understands

every machine for breaking in the human mind, and there are as many as there are cannon-bits, martingales, and cavessons for young colts."

"And if that were not the case," said Craigengelt, "how the devil should we ever get them into training at all?"

"And that's true too," said Bucklaw, suspending his march through the dining-room, and leaning upon the back of a chair. — "And besides, here's Ravenswood in the way still; do you think he'll give up Lucy's engagement?"

"To be sure he will," answered Craigengelt; "what good can it do him to refuse, since he wishes to marry another woman, and she another man?"

"And you believe seriously," said Bucklaw, "that he is going to marry the foreign lady we heard of?"

"You heard yourself," answered Craigengelt, "what Captain Westenho said about it, and the great preparation made for their blithesome bridal."

"Captain Westenho," replied Bucklaw, "has rather too much of your own cast about him, Craigie, to make what Sir William would call a 'famous witness.' He drinks deep, plays deep, swears deep, and I suspect can lie and cheat a little into the bargain. Useful qualities, Craigie, if kept in their proper sphere, but which have a little too much of the freebooter to make a figure in a court of evidence."

"Well, then," said Craigengelt, "will you believe Colonel Douglas Ashton, who heard the Marquis of A—— say in a public circle, but not aware that he was within ear-shot, that his kinsman had made a better arrangement for himself than to give his

father's land for the pale-cheeked daughter of a broken-down fanatic, and that Bucklaw was welcome to the wearing of Ravenswood's shaughled shoes."

"Did he say so, by heavens!" cried Bucklaw, breaking out into one of those incontrollable fits of passion to which he was constitutionally subject, — "if I had heard him, I would have torn the tongue out of his throat before all his peats and minions, and Highland bullies into the bargain. Why did not Ashton run him through the body?"

"Capote me if I know," said the Captain. "He deserved it sure enough; but he is an old man, and a minister of state, and there would be more risk than credit in meddling with him. You had more need to think of making up to Miss Lucy Ashton the disgrace that's like to fall upon her, than of interfering with a man too old to fight, and on too high a stool for your hand to reach him."

"It *shall* reach him, though, one day," said Bucklaw, "and his kinsman Ravenswood to boot. In the meantime, I'll take care Miss Ashton receives no discredit for the slight they have put upon her. It's an awkward job, however, and I wish it were ended; I scarce know how to talk to her, — but fill a bumper, Craigie, and we'll drink her health. It grows late, and a night-cowl of good claret is worth all the considering-caps in Europe."

CHAPTER VIII.

> It was the copy of our conference.
> In bed she slept not, for my urging it;
> At board she fed not, for my urging it;
> Alone, it was the subject of my theme;
> In company I often glanced at it.
>
> *Comedy of Errors.*

THE next morning saw Bucklaw, and his faithful Achates, Craigengelt, at Ravenswood Castle. They were most courteously received by the knight and his lady, as well as by their son and heir, Colonel Ashton. After a good deal of stammering and blushing, — for Bucklaw, notwithstanding his audacity in other matters, had all the sheepish bashfulness common to those who have lived little in respectable society, — he contrived at length to explain his wish to be admitted to a conference with Miss Ashton upon the subject of their approaching union. Sir William and his son looked at Lady Ashton, who replied with the greatest composure, "that Lucy would wait upon Mr. Hayston directly. I hope," she added with a smile, "that as Lucy is very young, and has been lately trepanned into an engagement, of which she is now heartily ashamed, our dear Bucklaw will excuse her wish, that I should be present at their interview?"

"In truth, my dear lady," said Bucklaw, "it is the very thing that I would have desired on my own account; for I have been so little accustomed to what is called gallantry, that I shall certainly

fall into some cursed mistake, unless I have the advantage of your ladyship as an interpreter."

It was thus that Bucklaw, in the perturbation of his embarrassment upon this critical occasion, forgot the just apprehensions he had entertained of Lady Ashton's overbearing ascendency over her daughter's mind, and lost an opportunity of ascertaining, by his own investigation, the real state of Lucy's feelings.

The other gentlemen left the room, and in a short time, Lady Ashton, followed by her daughter, entered the apartment. She appeared, as he had seen her on former occasions, rather composed than agitated; but a nicer judge than he could scarce have determined, whether her calmness was that of despair, or of indifference. Bucklaw was too much agitated by his own feelings minutely to scrutinize those of the lady. He stammered out an unconnected address, confounding together the two or three topics to which it related, and stopt short before he brought it to any regular conclusion. Miss Ashton listened, or looked as if she listened, but returned not a single word in answer, continuing to fix her eyes on a small piece of embroidery, on which, as if by instinct or habit, her fingers were busily employed. Lady Ashton sat at some distance, almost screened from notice by the deep embrasure of the window in which she had placed her chair. From this she whispered, in a tone of voice, which, though soft and sweet, had something in it of admonition, if not command, — "Lucy, my dear, remember — have you heard what Bucklaw has been saying?"

The idea of her mother's presence seemed to have slipped from the unhappy girl's recollection. She

started, dropped her needle, and repeated hastily, and almost in the same breath, the contradictory answers, "Yes, madam — no, my lady — I beg pardon, I did not hear."

"You need not blush, my love, and still less need you look so pale and frightened," said Lady Ashton, coming forward; "we know that maiden's ears must be slow in receiving a gentleman's language; but you must remember Mr. Hayston speaks on a subject on which you have long since agreed to give him a favourable hearing. You know how much your father and I have our hearts set upon an event so extremely desirable."

In Lady Ashton's voice, a tone of impressive, and even stern innuendo was sedulously and skilfully concealed, under an appearance of the most affectionate maternal tenderness. The manner was for Bucklaw, who was easily enough imposed upon; the matter of the exhortation was for the terrified Lucy, who well knew how to interpret her mother's hints, however skilfully their real purport might be veiled from general observation.

Miss Ashton sat upright in her chair, cast round her a glance, in which fear was mingled with a still wilder expression, but remained perfectly silent. Bucklaw, who had in the meantime paced the room to and fro, until he had recovered his composure, now stopped within two or three yards of her chair, and broke out as follows: — "I believe I have been a d—d fool, Miss Ashton; I have tried to speak to you as people tell me young ladies like to be talked to, and I don't think you comprehend what I have been saying; and no wonder, for d—n me if I understand it myself! But, however, once for all, and in broad Scotch, your father and mother like what is

proposed, and if you can take a plain young fellow for your husband, who will never cross you in any thing you have a mind to, I will place you at the head of the best establishment in the three Lothians; you shall have Lady Girnington's lodging in the Canongate of Edinburgh, go where you please, do what you please, and see what you please, and that's fair. Only I must have a corner at the board-end for a worthless old play-fellow of mine, whose company I would rather want than have, if it were not that the d—d fellow has persuaded me that I can't do without him; and so I hope you won't except against Craigie, although it might be easy to find much better company."

"Now, out upon you, Bucklaw," said Lady Ashton, again interposing, — "how can you think Lucy can have any objection to that blunt, honest, good-natured creature, Captain Craigengelt?"

"Why, madam," replied Bucklaw, "as to Craigie's sincerity, honesty, and good-nature, they are, I believe, pretty much upon a par — but that's neither here nor there — the fellow knows my ways, and has got useful to me, and I cannot well do without him, as I said before. But all this is nothing to the purpose; for, since I have mustered up courage to make a plain proposal, I would fain hear Miss Ashton, from her own lips, give me a plain answer."

"My dear Bucklaw," said Lady Ashton, "let me spare Lucy's bashfulness. I tell you, in her presence, that she has already consented to be guided by her father and me in this matter. — Lucy, my love," she added, with that singular combination of suavity of tone and pointed energy which we have already noticed —"Lucy, my dearest love! speak for yourself, is it not as I say?"

Her victim answered in a tremulous and hollow voice — "I *have* promised to obey you, — but upon one condition."

"She means," said Lady Ashton, turning to Bucklaw, "she expects an answer to the demand which she has made upon the man at Vienna, or Ratisbon, or Paris — or where is he — for restitution of the engagement in which he had the art to involve her. You will not, I am sure, my dear friend, think it is wrong that she should feel much delicacy upon this head; indeed, it concerns us all."

"Perfectly right — quite fair," said Bucklaw, half humming, half speaking the end of the old song —

> "It is best to be off wi' the old love
> Before you be on wi' the new."

"But I thought," said he, pausing, "you might have had an answer six times told from Ravenswood. D—n me, if I have not a mind to go and fetch one myself, if Miss Ashton will honour me with the commission."

"By no means," said Lady Ashton, "we have had the utmost difficulty of preventing Douglas, (for whom it would be more proper,) from taking so rash a step; and do you think we could permit you, my good friend, almost equally dear to us, to go to a desperate man upon an errand so desperate? In fact, all the friends of the family are of opinion, and my dear Lucy herself ought so to think, that, as this unworthy person has returned no answer to her letter, silence must on this, as in other cases, be held to give consent, and a contract must be supposed to be given up, when the party waves insisting upon it. Sir William, who should know

best, is clear upon this subject; and therefore, my dear Lucy" ——

"Madam," said Lucy, with unwonted energy, "urge me no farther — if this unhappy engagement be restored, I have already said you shall dispose of me as you will — till then I should commit a heavy sin in the sight of God and man, in doing what you require."

"But, my love, if this man remains obstinately silent" ——

"He will *not* be silent," answered Lucy; "it is six weeks since I sent him a double of my former letter by a sure hand."

"You have not — you could not — you durst not," said Lady Ashton, with violence inconsistent with the tone she had intended to assume; but instantly correcting herself, "My dearest Lucy," said she, in her sweetest tone of expostulation, "how could you think of such a thing?"

"No matter," said Bucklaw; "I respect Miss Ashton for her sentiments, and I only wish I had been her messenger myself."

"And pray how long, Miss Ashton," said her mother, ironically, "are we to wait the return of your Pacolet — your fairy messenger — since our humble couriers of flesh and blood could not be trusted in this matter?"

"I have numbered weeks, days, hours, and minutes," said Miss Ashton; "within another week I shall have an answer, unless he is dead. — Till that time, sir," she said, addressing Bucklaw, "let me be thus far beholden to you, that you will beg my mother to forbear me upon this subject."

"I will make it my particular entreaty to Lady Ashton," said Bucklaw. "By my honour, madam,

I respect your feelings; and, although the prosecution of this affair be rendered dearer to me than ever, yet, as I am a gentleman, I would renounce it, were it so urged as to give you a moment's pain."

"Mr. Hayston, I think, cannot apprehend that," said Lady Ashton, looking pale with anger, "when the daughter's happiness lies in the bosom of the mother. — Let me ask you, Miss Ashton, in what terms your last letter was couched?"

"Exactly in the same, madam," answered Lucy, "which you dictated on a former occasion."

"When eight days have elapsed, then," said her mother, resuming her tone of tenderness, "we shall hope, my dearest love, that you will end this suspense."

"Miss Ashton must not be hurried, madam," said Bucklaw, whose bluntness of feeling did not by any means arise from want of good-nature — "messengers may be stopped or delayed. I have known a day's journey broke by the casting off a fore-shoe. — Stay, let me see my calendar — the 20th day from this is St. Jude's, and, the day before, I must be at Caverton Edge to see the match between the Laird of Kittlegirth's black mare, and Johnston the meal-monger's four-year-old colt; but I can ride all night, or Craigie can bring me word how the match goes; and I hope, in the meantime, as I shall not myself distress Miss Ashton with any further importunity, that your ladyship yourself, and Sir William, and Colonel Douglas, will have the goodness to allow her uninterrupted time for making up her mind."

"Sir," said Miss Ashton, "you are generous."

"As for that, madam," answered Bucklaw, "I only pretend to be a plain good-humoured young

fellow, as I said before, who will willingly make you happy if you will permit him, and show him how to do so."

Having said this, he saluted her with more emotion than was consistent with his usual train of feeling, and took his leave; Lady Ashton, as she accompanied him out of the apartment, assuring him that her daughter did full justice to the sincerity of his attachment, and requesting him to see Sir William before his departure, "since," as she said, with a keen glance reverting towards Lucy, "against St. Jude's day, we must all be ready to *sign and seal.*"

"To sign and seal!" echoed Lucy in a muttering tone, as the door of the apartment closed — "To sign and seal — to do and die!" and, clasping her extenuated hands together, she sunk back on the easy-chair she occupied, in a state resembling stupor.

From this she was shortly after awakened by the boisterous entry of her brother Henry, who clamorously reminded her of a promise to give him two yards of carnation ribbon to make knots to his new garters. With the most patient composure Lucy arose, and opening a little ivory-cabinet, sought out the ribbon the lad wanted, measured it accurately, cut it off into proper lengths, and knotted into the fashion his boyish whim required.

"Dinna shut the cabinet yet," said Henry, "for I must have some of your silver wire to fasten the bells to my hawk's jesses, — and yet the new falcon's not worth them neither; for do you know, after all the plague we had to get her from an eyry, all the way at Posso, in Mannor Water, she's going to prove, after all, nothing better than a

rifler — she just wets her singles in the blood of the partridge, and then breaks away, and lets her fly; and what good can the poor bird do after that, you know, except pine and die in the first heather-cow or whin-bush she can crawl into?"

"Right, Henry — right, very right," said Lucy, mournfully, holding the boy fast by the hand, after she had given him the wire he wanted; "but there are more riflers in the world than your falcon, and more wounded birds that seek but to die in quiet, that can find neither brake nor whin-bush to hide their heads in."

"Ah! that's some speech out of your romances," said the boy; "and Sholto says they have turned your head. But I hear Norman whistling to the hawk — I must go fasten on the jesses."

And he scampered away with the thoughtless gaiety of boyhood, leaving his sister to the bitterness of her own reflections.

"It is decreed," she said, "that every living creature, even those who owe me most kindness, are to shun me, and leave me to those by whom I am beset. It is just it should be thus. Alone and uncounselled, I involved myself in these perils — alone and uncounselled, I must extricate myself or die."

CHAPTER IX.

——————— What doth ensue
But moody and dull melancholy,
Kinsman to grim and comfortless despair,
And, at her heels, a huge infectious troop
Of pale distemperatures, and foes to life?

Comedy of Errors.

As some vindication of the ease with which Bucklaw (who otherwise, as he termed himself, was really a very good-humoured fellow) resigned his judgment to the management of Lady Ashton, while paying his addresses to her daughter, the reader must call to mind the strict domestic discipline, which, at this period, was exercised over the females of a Scottish family.

The manners of the country in this, as in many other respects, coincided with those of France before the revolution. Young women of the higher ranks seldom mingled in society until after marriage, and, both in law and fact, were held to be under the strict tutelage of their parents, who were too apt to enforce the views for their settlement in life, without paying any regard to the inclination of the parties chiefly interested. On such occasions, the suitor expected little more from his bride than a silent acquiescence in the will of her parents; and as few opportunities of acquaintance, far less of intimacy, occurred, he made his choice by the outside, as the lovers in the Merchant of Venice select the

casket, contented to trust to chance the issue of the lottery, in which he had hazarded a venture.

It was not therefore surprising, such being the general manners of the age, that Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw, whom dissipated habits had detached in some degree from the best society, should not attend particularly to those feelings in his elected bride, to which many men of more sentiment, experience, and reflection, would, in all probability, have been equally indifferent. He knew what all accounted the principal point, that her parents and friends, namely, were decidedly in his favour, and that there existed most powerful reasons for their predilection.

In truth, the conduct of the Marquis of A——, since Ravenswood's departure, had been such as almost to bar the possibility of his kinsman's union with Lucy Ashton. The Marquis was Ravenswood's sincere, but misjudging friend; or rather, like many friends and patrons, he consulted what he considered to be his relation's true interest, although he knew that in doing so he run counter to his inclinations.

The Marquis drove on, therefore, with the plenitude of ministerial authority, an appeal to the British House of Peers against those judgments of the courts of law, by which Sir William became possessed of Ravenswood's hereditary property. As this measure, enforced with all the authority of power, was new in Scottish judicial proceedings, though now so frequently resorted to, it was exclaimed against by the lawyers on the opposite side of politics, as an interference with the civil judicature of the country, equally new, arbitrary, and tyrannical. And if it thus affected even strangers connected with them only by political party, it may

be guessed what the Ashton family themselves said and thought under so gross a dispensation. Sir William, still more worldly minded than he was timid, was reduced to despair by the loss by which he was threatened. His son's haughtier spirit was exalted into rage at the idea of being deprived of his expected patrimony. But to Lady Ashton's yet more vindictive temper, the conduct of Ravenswood, or rather of his patron, appeared to be an offence challenging the deepest and most immortal revenge. Even the quiet and confiding temper of Lucy herself, swayed by the opinions expressed by all around her, could not but consider the conduct of Ravenswood as precipitate, and even unkind. "It was my father," she repeated with a sigh, "who welcomed him to this place, and encouraged, or at least allowed, the intimacy between us. Should he not have remembered this, and requited it with at least some moderate degree of procrastination in the assertion of his own alleged rights? I would have forfeited for him double the value of these lands, which he pursues with an ardour that shows he has forgotten how much I am implicated in the matter."

Lucy, however, could only murmur these things to herself, unwilling to increase the prejudices against her lover entertained by all around her, who exclaimed against the steps pursued on his account, as illegal, vexatious, and tyrannical, resembling the worst measures in the worst times of the worst Stewarts, and a degradation of Scotland, the decisions of whose learned judges were thus subjected to the review of a court, composed indeed of men of the highest rank, but who were not trained to the study of any municipal law, and might be

supposed specially to hold in contempt that of Scotland. As a natural consequence of the alleged injustice meditated towards her father, every means was resorted to, and every argument urged, to induce Miss Ashton to break off her engagement with Ravenswood, as being scandalous, shameful, and sinful, formed with the mortal enemy of her family, and calculated to add bitterness to the distress of her parents.

Lucy's spirit, however, was high; and although unaided and alone, she could have borne much — she could have endured the repinings of her father — his murmurs against what he called the tyrannical usage of the ruling party — his ceaseless charges of ingratitude against Ravenswood — his endless lectures on the various means by which contracts may be voided and annulled — his quotations from the civil, the municipal, and the canon law — and his prelections upon the *patria potestas.*

She might have borne also in patience, or repelled with scorn, the bitter taunts and occasional violence of her brother Colonel Douglas Ashton, and the impertinent and intrusive interference of other friends and relations. But it was beyond her power effectually to withstand or elude the constant and unceasing persecution of Lady Ashton, who, laying every other wish aside, had bent the whole efforts of her powerful mind to break her daughter's contract with Ravenswood, and to place a perpetual bar between the lovers, by effecting Lucy's union with Bucklaw. Far more deeply skilled than her husband in the recesses of the human heart, she was aware, that in this way she might strike a blow of deep and decisive vengeance upon one, whom she esteemed as her mortal enemy; nor did she

hesitate at raising her arm, although she knew that the wound must be dealt through the bosom of her daughter. With this stern and fixed purpose, she sounded every deep and shallow of her daughter's soul, assumed alternately every disguise of manner which could serve her object, and prepared at leisure every species of dire machinery, by which the human mind can be wrenched from its settled determination. Some of these were of an obvious description, and require only to be cursorily mentioned; others were characteristic of the time, the country, and the persons engaged in this singular drama.

It was of the last consequence, that all intercourse betwixt the lovers should be stopped, and, by dint of gold and authority, Lady Ashton contrived to possess herself of such a complete command of all who were placed around her daughter, that, in fact, no leaguered fortress was ever more completely blockaded; while, at the same time, to all outward appearance, Miss Ashton lay under no restriction. The verge of her parents' domains became, in respect to her, like the viewless and enchanted line drawn around a fairy castle, where nothing unpermitted can either enter from without, or escape from within. Thus every letter, in which Ravenswood conveyed to Lucy Ashton the indispensable reasons which detained him abroad, and more than one note which poor Lucy had addressed to him through what she thought a secure channel, fell into the hands of her mother. It could not be, but that the tenor of these intercepted letters, especially those of Ravenswood, should contain something to irritate the passions, and fortify the obstinacy, of her into whose hands they fell; but

Lady Ashton's passions were too deep-rooted to require this fresh food. She burnt the papers as regularly as she perused them; and as they consumed into vapour and tinder, regarded them with a smile upon her compressed lips, and an exultation in her steady eye, which showed her confidence that the hopes of the writers should soon be rendered equally unsubstantial.

It usually happens, that fortune aids the machinations of those who are prompt to avail themselves of every chance that offers. A report was wafted from the Continent, founded, like others of the same sort, upon many plausible circumstances, but without any real basis, stating the Master of Ravenswood to be on the eve of marriage with a foreign lady of fortune and distinction. This was greedily caught up by both the political parties, who were at once struggling for power and for popular favour, and who seized, as usual, upon the most private circumstances in the lives of each other's partisans, to convert them into subjects of political discussion.

The Marquis of A—— gave his opinion aloud and publicly, not indeed in the coarse terms ascribed to him by Captain Craigengelt, but in a manner sufficiently offensive to the Ashtons:—"He thought the report," he said, "highly probable, and heartily wished it might be true. Such a match was fitter and far more creditable for a spirited young fellow, than a marriage with the daughter of an old whig lawyer, whose chicanery had so nearly ruined his father."

The other party, of course, laying out of view the opposition which the Master of Ravenswood received from Miss Ashton's family, cried shame

upon his fickleness and perfidy, as if he had seduced the young lady into an engagement, and wilfully and causelessly abandoned her for another.

Sufficient care was taken that this report should find its way to Ravenswood Castle through every various channel, Lady Ashton being well aware, that the very reiteration of the same rumour from so many quarters could not but give it a semblance of truth. By some it was told as a piece of ordinary news, by some communicated as serious intelligence; now it was whispered to Lucy Ashton's ear in the tone of malignant pleasantry, and now transmitted to her as a matter of grave and serious warning.

Even the boy Henry was made the instrument of adding to his sister's torments. One morning he rushed into the room with a willow branch in his hand, which he told her had arrived that instant from Germany for her special wearing. Lucy, as we have seen, was remarkably fond of her younger brother, and at that moment his wanton and thoughtless unkindness seemed more keenly injurious than even the studied insults of her elder brother. Her grief, however, had no shade of resentment; she folded her arms about the boy's neck, and saying, faintly, "Poor Henry! you speak but what they tell you," she burst into a flood of unrestrained tears. The boy was moved, notwithstanding the thoughtlessness of his age and character. "The devil take me," said he, "Lucy, if I fetch you any more of these tormenting messages again; for I like you better," said he, kissing away the tears, "than the whole pack of them; and you shall have my grey pony to ride on, and you shall canter him if you like,—ay, and ride beyond the village, too, if you have a mind."

"Who told you," said Lucy, "that I am not permitted to ride where I please?"

"That's a secret," said the boy; "but you will find you can never ride beyond the village but your horse will cast a shoe, or fall lame, or the castle bell will ring, or something will happen to bring you back. — But if I tell you more of these things, Douglas will not get me the pair of colours they have promised me, and so good-morrow to you."

This dialogue plunged Lucy in still deeper dejection, as it tended to show her plainly what she had for some time suspected, that she was little better than a prisoner at large in her father's house. We have described her in the outset of our story as of a romantic disposition, delighting in tales of love and wonder, and readily identifying herself with the situation of those legendary heroines, with whose adventures, for want of better reading, her memory had become stocked. The fairy wand, with which in her solitude she had delighted to raise visions of enchantment, became now the rod of a magician, the bond slave of evil genii, serving only to invoke spectres at which the exorcist trembled. She felt herself the object of suspicion, of scorn, of dislike at least, if not of hatred, to her own family; and it seemed to her that she was abandoned by the very person on whose account she was exposed to the enmity of all around her. Indeed, the evidence of Ravenswood's infidelity began to assume every day a more determined character.

A soldier of fortune, of the name of Westenho, an old familiar of Craigengelt's, chanced to arrive from abroad about this time. The worthy Captain, though without any precise communication with

Lady Ashton, always acted most regularly and sedulously in support of her plans, and easily prevailed upon his friend, by dint of exaggeration of real circumstances, and coining of others, to give explicit testimony to the truth of Ravenswood's approaching marriage.

Thus beset on all hands, and in a manner reduced to despair, Lucy's temper gave way under the pressure of constant affliction and persecution. She became gloomy and abstracted, and, contrary to her natural and ordinary habit of mind, sometimes turned with spirit, and even fierceness, on those by whom she was long and closely annoyed. Her health also began to be shaken, and her hectic cheek and wandering eye gave symptoms of what is called a fever upon the spirits. In most mothers this would have moved compassion; but Lady Ashton, compact and firm of purpose, saw these waverings of health and intellect with no greater sympathy than that with which the hostile engineer regards the towers of a beleaguered city as they reel under the discharge of his artillery; or rather, she considered these starts and inequalities of temper as symptoms of Lucy's expiring resolution; as the angler, by the throes and convulsive exertions of the fish which he has hooked, becomes aware that he soon will be able to land him. To accelerate the catastrophe in the present case, Lady Ashton had recourse to an expedient very consistent with the temper and credulity of those times, but which the reader will probably pronounce truly detestable and diabolical.

CHAPTER X.

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In which a witch did dwell, in loathly weeds,
And wilful want, all careless of her needs;
So choosing solitary to abide,
Far from all neighbours, that her devilish deeds
And hellish arts from people she might hide,
And hurt far off, unknown, whome'er she envied.

Fairy Queen.

THE health of Lucy Ashton soon required the assistance of a person more skilful in the office of a sick nurse than the female domestics of the family. Ailsie Gourlay, sometimes called the Wise Woman of Bowden, was the person whom, for her own strong reasons, Lady Ashton selected as an attendant upon her daughter.

This woman had acquired a considerable reputation among the ignorant by the pretended cures which she performed, especially in *oncomes*, as the Scotch call them, or mysterious diseases, which baffle the regular physician. Her pharmacopeia consisted partly of herbs selected in planetary hours, partly of words, signs, and charms, which sometimes, perhaps, produced a favourable influence upon the imagination of her patients. Such was the avowed profession of Lucky Gourlay, which, as may well be supposed, was looked upon with a suspicious eye, not only by her neighbours, but even by the clergy of the district. In private, how-

ever, she traded more deeply in the occult sciences; for, notwithstanding the dreadful punishments inflicted upon the supposed crime of witchcraft, there wanted not those who, steeled by want and bitterness of spirit, were willing to adopt the hateful and dangerous character, for the sake of the influence which its terrors enabled them to exercise in the vicinity, and the wretched emolument which they could extract by the practice of their supposed art.

Ailsie Gourlay was not indeed fool enough to acknowledge a compact with the Evil One, which would have been a swift and ready road to the stake and tar-barrel. Her fairy, she said, like Caliban's, was a harmless fairy. Nevertheless, she "spaed fortunes," read dreams, composed philtres, discovered stolen goods, and made and dissolved matches as successfully as if, according to the belief of the whole neighbourhood, she had been aided in those arts by Beelzebub himself. The worst of the pretenders to these sciences was, that they were generally persons who, feeling themselves odious to humanity, were careless of what they did to deserve the public hatred. Real crimes were often committed under pretence of magical imposture; and it somewhat relieves the disgust with which we read, in the criminal records, the conviction of these wretches, to be aware that many of them merited, as poisoners, suborners, and diabolical agents in secret domestic crimes, the severe fate to which they were condemned for the imaginary guilt of witchcraft.

Such was Ailsie Gourlay, whom, in order to attain the absolute subjugation of Lucy Ashton's mind, her mother thought it fitting to place near her per-

son. A woman of less consequence than Lady Ashton had not dared to take such a step; but her high rank and strength of character set her above the censure of the world, and she was allowed to have selected for her daughter's attendant the best and most experienced sick-nurse "and mediciner" in the neighbourhood, where an inferior person would have fallen under the reproach of calling in the assistance of a partner and ally of the great Enemy of mankind.

The beldam caught her cue readily and by innuendo, without giving Lady Ashton the pain of distinct explanation. She was in many respects qualified for the part she played, which indeed could not be efficiently assumed without some knowledge of the human heart and passions. Dame Gourlay perceived that Lucy shuddered at her external appearance, which we have already described when we found her in the death-chamber of blind Alice; and while internally she hated the poor girl for the involuntary horror with which she saw she was regarded, she commenced her operations by endeavouring to efface or overcome those prejudices which, in her heart, she resented as mortal offences. This was easily done, for the hag's external ugliness was soon balanced by a show of kindness and interest, to which Lucy had of late been little accustomed; her attentive services and real skill gained her the ear, if not the confidence, of her patient; and under pretence of diverting the solitude of a sick room, she soon led her attention captive by the legends in which she was well skilled, and to which Lucy's habits of reading and reflection induced her to "lend an attentive ear." Dame Gourlay's tales were at first of a mild and interesting character —

Of fays that nightly dance upon the wold,
And lovers doom'd to wander and to weep,
And castles high, where wicked wizards keep
Their captive thralls.

Gradually, however, they assumed a darker and more mysterious character, and became such as, told by the midnight lamp, and enforced by the tremulous tone, the quivering and livid lip, the uplifted skinny fore-finger, and the shaking head of the blue-eyed hag, might have appalled a less credulous imagination, in an age more hard of belief. The old Sycorax saw her advantage, and gradually narrowed her magic circle around the devoted victim on whose spirit she practised. Her legends began to relate to the fortunes of the Ravenswood family, whose ancient grandeur and portentous authority, credulity had graced with so many superstitious attributes. The story of the fatal fountain was narrated at full length, and with formidable additions, by the ancient sibyl. The prophecy, quoted by Caleb, concerning the dead bride, who was to be won by the last of the Ravenswoods, had its own mysterious commentary; and the singular circumstance of the apparition, seen by the Master of Ravenswood in the forest, having partly transpired through his hasty inquiries in the cottage of old Alice, formed a theme for many exaggerations.

Lucy might have despised these tales, if they had been related concerning another family, or if her own situation had been less despondent. But circumstanced as she was, the idea that an evil fate hung over her attachment, became predominant over her other feelings; and the gloom of superstition darkened a mind, already sufficiently weakened by sorrow, distress, uncertainty, and an oppressive sense

of desertion and desolation. Stories were told by her attendant so closely resembling her own in their circumstances, that she was gradually led to converse upon such tragic and mystical subjects with the beldam, and to repose a sort of confidence in the sibyl, whom she still regarded with involuntary shuddering. Dame Gourlay knew how to avail herself of this imperfect confidence. She directed Lucy's thoughts to the means of enquiring into futurity, — the surest mode, perhaps, of shaking the understanding and destroying the spirits. Omens were expounded, dreams were interpreted, and other tricks of jugglery perhaps resorted to, by which the pretended adepts of the period deceived and fascinated their deluded followers. I find it mentioned in the articles of dittay against Ailsie Gourlay, — (for it is some comfort to know that the old hag was tried, condemned, and burned on the top of North-Berwick Law, by sentence of a commission from the Privy Council,) — I find, I say, it was charged against her, among other offences, that she had, by the aid and delusions of Satan, shown to a young person of quality, in a mirror glass, a gentleman then abroad, to whom the said young person was betrothed, and who appeared in the vision to be in the act of bestowing his hand upon another lady. But this and some other parts of the record appear to have been studiously left imperfect in names and dates, probably out of regard to the honour of the families concerned. If Dame Gourlay was able actually to play off such a piece of jugglery, it is clear she must have had better assistance to practise the deception, than her own skill or funds could supply. Meanwhile, this mysterious visionary traffic had its usual effect, in un-

settling Miss Ashton's mind. Her temper became unequal, her health decayed daily, her manners grew moping, melancholy, and uncertain. Her father, guessing partly at the cause of these appearances, and exerting a degree of authority unusual with him, made a point of banishing Dame Gourlay from the castle; but the arrow was shot, and was rankling barb-deep in the side of the wounded deer.

It was shortly after the departure of this woman, that Lucy Ashton, urged by her parents, announced to them, with a vivacity by which they were startled, "that she was conscious heaven and earth and hell had set themselves against her union with Ravenswood; still her contract," she said, "was a binding contract, and she neither would nor could resign it without the consent of Ravenswood. Let me be assured," she concluded, "that he will free me from my engagement, and dispose of me as you please, I care not how. When the diamonds are gone, what signifies the casket?"

The tone of obstinacy with which this was said, her eyes flashing with unnatural light, and her hands firmly clenched, precluded the possibility of dispute; and the utmost length which Lady Ashton's art could attain, only got her the privilege of dictating the letter, by which her daughter required to know of Ravenswood whether he intended to abide by, or to surrender, what she termed, "their unfortunate engagement." Of this advantage Lady Ashton so far and so ingeniously availed herself, that, according to the wording of the letter, the reader would have supposed Lucy was calling upon her lover to renounce a contract which was contrary to the interests and inclinations of both. Not trusting even to this point of deception, Lady Ashton finally de-

termined to suppress the letter altogether, in hopes that Lucy's impatience would induce her to condemn Ravenswood unheard and in absence. In this she was disappointed. The time, indeed, had long elapsed, when an answer should have been received from the Continent. The faint ray of hope which still glimmered in Lucy's mind was wellnigh extinguished. But the idea never forsook her, that her letter might not have been duly forwarded. One of her mother's new machinations unexpectedly furnished her with the means of ascertaining what she most desired to know.

The female agent of hell having been dismissed from the castle, Lady Ashton, who wrought by all variety of means, resolved to employ, for working the same end on Lucy's mind, an agent of a very different character. This was no other than the Reverend Mr. Bide-the-bent, a Presbyterian clergyman, formerly mentioned, of the very strictest order, and the most rigid orthodoxy, whose aid she called in, upon the principle of the tyrant in the tragedy:—

> "I'll have a priest shall preach her from her faith,
> And make it sin not to renounce that vow,
> Which I'd have broken."

But Lady Ashton was mistaken in the agent she had selected. His prejudices, indeed, were easily enlisted on her side, and it was no difficult matter to make him regard with horror the prospect of a union betwixt the daughter of a God-fearing, professing, and Presbyterian family of distinction, with the heir of a bloodthirsty prelatist and persecutor, the hands of whose fathers had been dyed to the wrists in the blood of God's saints. This resembled, in the divine's opinion, the union of a Moabitish stranger

with a daughter of Zion. But with all the more severe prejudices and principles of his sect, Bide-the-bent possessed a sound judgment, and had learnt sympathy even in that very school of persecution, where the heart is so frequently hardened. In a private interview with Miss Ashton, he was deeply moved by her distress, and could not but admit the justice of her request to be permitted a direct communication with Ravenswood, upon the subject of their solemn contract. When she urged to him the great uncertainty under which she laboured, whether her letter had been ever forwarded, the old man paced the room with long steps, shook his grey head, rested repeatedly for a space on his ivory-headed staff, and, after much hesitation, confessed that he thought her doubts so reasonable, that he would himself aid in the removal of them.

"I cannot but opine, Miss Lucy," he said, "that your worshipful lady mother hath in this matter an eagerness, whilk, although it ariseth doubtless from love to your best interests here and hereafter, — for the man is of persecuting blood, and himself a persecutor, a cavalier or malignant, and a scoffer, who hath no inheritance in Jesse, — nevertheless, we are commanded to do justice unto all, and to fulfil our bond and covenant, as well to the stranger, as to him who is in brotherhood with us. Wherefore myself, even I myself, will be aiding unto the delivery of your letter to the man Edgar Ravenswood, trusting that the issue thereof may be your deliverance from the nets in which he hath sinfully engaged you. And that I may do in this neither more nor less than hath been warranted by your honourable parents, I pray you to transcribe, without increment or subtraction, the letter formerly expeded under the

dictation of your right honourable mother; and I shall put it into such sure course of being delivered, that if, honoured young madam, you shall receive no answer, it will be necessary that you conclude that the man meaneth in silence to abandon that naughty contract, which, peradventure, he may be unwilling directly to restore."

Lucy eagerly embraced the expedient of the worthy divine. A new letter was written in the precise terms of the former, and consigned by Mr. Bide-the-bent to the charge of Saunders Moonshine, a zealous elder of the church when on shore, and, when on board his brig, as bold a smuggler as ever ran out a sliding bowsprit to the winds that blow betwixt Campvere and the east coast of Scotland. At the recommendation of his pastor, Saunders readily undertook that the letter should be securely conveyed to the Master of Ravenswood at the court where he now resided.

This retrospect became necessary to explain the conference betwixt Miss Ashton, her mother, and Bucklaw, which we have detailed in a preceding chapter.

Lucy was now like the sailor, who, while drifting through a tempestuous ocean, clings for safety to a single plank, his powers of grasping it becoming every moment more feeble, and the deep darkness of the night only checkered by the flashes of lightning, hissing as they show the white tops of the billows, in which he is soon to be engulfed.

Week crept away after week, and day after day. St. Jude's day arrived, the last and protracted term to which Lucy had limited herself, and there was neither letter nor news of Ravenswood.

CHAPTER XI.

How fair these names, how much unlike they look
To all the blurr'd subscriptions in my book!
The bridegroom's letters stand in row above,
Tapering, yet straight, like pine-trees in his grove;
While free and fine the bride's appear below,
As light and slender as her jessamines grow.

CRABBE.

ST. JUDE'S day came, the term assigned by Lucy herself as the furthest date of expectation, and, as we have already said, there were neither letters from, nor news of, Ravenswood. But there were news of Bucklaw, and of his trusty associate Craigengelt, who arrived early in the morning for the completion of the proposed espousals, and for signing the necessary deeds.

These had been carefully prepared under the revisal of Sir William Ashton himself, it having been resolved, on account of the state of Miss Ashton's health, as it was said, that none save the parties immediately interested should be present when the parchments were subscribed. It was further determined, that the marriage should be solemnized upon the fourth day after signing the articles, a measure adopted by Lady Ashton, in order that Lucy might have as little time as possible to recede, or relapse into intractability. There was no appearance, however, of her doing either. She heard the proposed arrangement with the calm indifference of despair, or rather with an apathy arising from the oppressed

and stupified state of her feelings. To an eye so unobserving as that of Bucklaw, her demeanour had little more of reluctance than might suit the character of a bashful young lady, who, however, he could not disguise from himself, was complying with the choice of her friends, rather than exercising any personal predilection in his favour.

When the morning compliments of the bridegroom had been paid, Miss Ashton was left for some time to herself; her mother remarking, that the deeds must be signed before the hour of noon, in order that the marriage might be happy.

Lucy suffered herself to be attired for the occasion as the taste of her attendants suggested, and was of course splendidly arrayed. Her dress was composed of white satin and Brussels lace, and her hair arranged with a profusion of jewels, whose lustre made a strange contrast to the deadly paleness of her complexion, and to the trouble which dwelt in her unsettled eye.

Her toilette was hardly finished, ere Henry appeared, to conduct the passive bride to the state apartment, where all was prepared for signing the contract. "Do you know, sister," he said, "I am glad you are to have Bucklaw after all, instead of Ravenswood, who looked like a Spanish grandee come to cut our throats, and trample our bodies under foot. And I am glad the broad seas are between us this day, for I shall never forget how frightened I was when I took him for the picture of old Sir Malise walked out of the canvas. Tell me true, are you not glad to be fairly shot of him?"

"Ask me no questions, dear Henry," said his unfortunate sister; "there is little more can happen to make me either glad or sorry in this world."

"And that's what all young brides say," said Henry; "and so do not be cast down, Lucy, for you'll tell another tale a twelvemonth hence — and I am to be bride's-man, and ride before you to the kirk, and all our kith, kin, and allies, and all Bucklaw's, are to be mounted and in order — and I am to have a scarlet laced coat, and a feathered hat, and a sword-belt, double bordered with gold, and *point d'espagne*, and a dagger instead of a sword; and I should like a sword much better, but my father won't hear of it. All my things, and a hundred besides, are to come out from Edinburgh to-night with old Gilbert, and the sumpter mules — and I will bring them, and show them to you the instant they come."

The boy's chatter was here interrupted by the arrival of Lady Ashton, somewhat alarmed at her daughter's stay. With one of her sweetest smiles, she took Lucy's arm under her own, and led her to the apartment where her presence was expected.

There were only present, Sir William Ashton, and Colonel Douglas Ashton, the last in full regimentals — Bucklaw, in bridegroom trim — Craigengelt, freshly equipt from top to toe by the bounty of his patron, and bedizened with as much lace as might have become the dress of the Copper Captain, together with the Rev. Mr. Bide-the-bent; the presence of a minister being, in strict Presbyterian families, an indispensable requisite upon all occasions of unusual solemnity.

Wines and refreshments were placed on a table, on which the writings were displayed, ready for signature.

But before proceeding either to business or refreshment, Mr. Bide-the-bent, at a signal from Sir

William Ashton, invited the company to join him in a short extemporary prayer, in which he implored a blessing upon the contract now to be solemnized between the honourable parties then present. With the simplicity of his times and profession, which permitted strong personal allusions, he petitioned, that the wounded mind of one of these noble parties might be healed, in reward of her compliance with the advice of her right honourable parents; and that, as she had proved herself a child after God's commandment, by honouring her father and mother, she and hers might enjoy the promised blessing — length of days in the land here, and a happy portion hereafter in a better country. He prayed farther, that the bridegroom might be weaned from those follies which seduce youth from the path of knowledge; that he might cease to take delight in vain and unprofitable company, scoffers, rioters, and those who sit late at the wine, (here Bucklaw winked to Craigengelt,) and cease from the society that causeth to err. A suitable supplication in behalf of Sir William and Lady Ashton, and their family, concluded this religious address, which thus embraced every individual present, excepting Craigengelt, whom the worthy divine probably considered as past all hopes of grace.

The business of the day now went forward; Sir William Ashton signed the contract with legal solemnity and precision; his son, with military *nonchalance;* and Bucklaw, having subscribed as rapidly as Craigengelt could manage to turn the leaves, concluded by wiping his pen on that worthy's new laced cravat.

It was now Miss Ashton's turn to sign the writings, and she was guided by her watchful mother to

the table for that purpose. At her first attempt, she began to write with a dry pen, and when the circumstance was pointed out, seemed unable, after several attempts, to dip it in the massive silver ink-standish, which stood full before her. Lady Ashton's vigilance hastened to supply the deficiency. I have myself seen the fatal deed, and in the distinct characters in which the name of Lucy Ashton is traced on each page, there is only a very slight tremulous irregularity, indicative of her state of mind at the time of the subscription. But the last signature is incomplete, defaced and blotted; for, while her hand was employed in tracing it, the hasty tramp of a horse was heard at the gate, succeeded by a step in the outer gallery, and a voice, which, in a commanding tone, bore down the opposition of the menials. The pen dropped from Lucy's fingers, as she exclaimed with a faint shriek — "He is come — he is come!"

CHAPTER XII.

This by his tongue should be a Montague!
Fetch me my rapier, boy;
Now, by the faith and honour of my kin,
To strike him dead I hold it not a sin.

Romeo and Juliet.

HARDLY had Miss Ashton dropped the pen, when the door of the apartment flew open, and the Master of Ravenswood entered the apartment.

Lockhard and another domestic, who had in vain attempted to oppose his passage through the gallery or antechamber, were seen standing on the threshold transfixed with surprise, which was instantly communicated to the whole party in the state-room. That of Colonel Douglas Ashton was mingled with resentment; that of Bucklaw, with haughty and affected indifference; the rest, even Lady Ashton herself, showed signs of fear, and Lucy seemed stiffened to stone by this unexpected apparition. Apparition it might well be termed, for Ravenswood had more the appearance of one returned from the dead, than of a living visitor.

He planted himself full in the middle of the apartment, opposite to the table at which Lucy was seated, on whom, as if she had been alone in the chamber, he bent his eyes with a mingled expression of deep grief and deliberate indignation. His dark-coloured riding cloak, displaced from one shoulder, hung around one side of his person in the ample folds of the Spanish mantle. The rest of

his rich dress was travel-soil'd, and deranged by hard riding. He had a sword by his side, and pistols in his belt. His slouched hat, which he had not removed at entrance, gave an additional gloom to his dark features, which, wasted by sorrow, and marked by the ghastly look communicated by long illness, added to a countenance naturally somewhat stern and wild, a fierce and even savage expression. The matted and dishevelled locks of hair which escaped from under his hat, together with his fixed and unmoved posture, made his head more resemble that of a marble bust than that of a living man. He said not a single word, and there was a deep silence in the company for more than two minutes.

It was broken by Lady Ashton, who in that space partly recovered her natural audacity. She demanded to know the cause of this unauthorized intrusion.

"That is a question, madam," said her son, "which I have the best right to ask—and I must request of the Master of Ravenswood to follow me, where he can answer it at leisure."

Bucklaw interposed, saying, "No man on earth should usurp his previous right in demanding an explanation from the Master.—Craigengelt," he added, in an under tone, "d—n ye, why do you stand staring as if you saw a ghost? fetch me my sword from the gallery."

"I will relinquish to none," said Colonel Ashton, "my right of calling to account the man who has offered this unparalleled affront to my family."

"Be patient, gentlemen," said Ravenswood, turning sternly towards them, and waving his hand as if to impose silence on their altercation. "If you are as weary of your lives as I am, I will find time

and place to pledge mine against one or both; at present, I have no leisure for the disputes of triflers."

"Triflers!" echoed Colonel Ashton, half unsheathing his sword, while Bucklaw laid his hand on the hilt of that which Craigengelt had just reached him.

Sir William Ashton, alarmed for his son's safety, rushed between the young men and Ravenswood, exclaiming, "My son, I command you — Bucklaw, I entreat you — keep the peace, in the name of the Queen and of the law!"

"In the name of the law of God," said Bide-the-bent, advancing also with uplifted hands between Bucklaw, the Colonel, and the object of their resentment — "In the name of Him who brought peace on earth, and good-will to mankind, I implore — I beseech — I command you to forbear violence towards each other! God hateth the bloodthirsty man — he who striketh with the sword, shall perish with the sword."

"Do you take me for a dog, sir," said Colonel Ashton, turning fiercely upon him, "or something more brutally stupid, to endure this insult in my father's house? — Let me go, Bucklaw! He shall account to me, or, by Heaven, I will stab him where he stands!"

"You shall not touch him here," said Bucklaw; "he once gave me my life, and were he the devil come to fly away with the whole house and generation, he shall have nothing but fair play."

The passions of the two young men thus counteracting each other, gave Ravenswood leisure to exclaim, in a stern and steady voice, "Silence! — let him who really seeks danger, take the fitting time when it is to be found; my mission here will

be shortly accomplished, — Is *that* your handwriting, madam?" he added in a softer tone, extending towards Miss Ashton her last letter.

A faltering "Yes," seemed rather to escape from her lips, than to be uttered as a voluntary answer.

"And is *this* also your handwriting?" extending towards her the mutual engagement.

Lucy remained silent. Terror, and a yet stronger and more confused feeling, so utterly disturbed her understanding, that she probably scarcely comprehended the question that was put to her.

"If you design," said Sir William Ashton, "to found any legal claim on that paper, sir, do not expect to receive any answer to an extrajudicial question."

"Sir William Ashton," said Ravenswood, "I pray you, and all who hear me, that you will not mistake my purpose. If this young lady, of her own free will, desires the restoration of this contract, as her letter would seem to imply — there is not a withered leaf which this autumn wind strews on the heath, that is more valueless in my eyes. But I must and will hear the truth from her own mouth — without this satisfaction I will not leave this spot. Murder me by numbers you possibly may; but I am an armed man — I am a desperate man — and I will not die without ample vengeance. This is my resolution, take it as you may. I WILL hear her determination from her own mouth; from her own mouth, alone, and without witnesses, will I hear it. Now, choose," he said, drawing his sword with the right hand, and, with the left, by the same motion taking a pistol from his belt and cocking it, but turning the point of one weapon and the muzzle

of the other to the ground, — "Choose if you will have this hall floated with blood, or if you will grant me the decisive interview with my affianced bride, which the laws of God and the country alike entitle me to demand."

All recoiled at the sound of his voice, and the determined action by which it was accompanied; for the ecstasy of real desperation seldom fails to overpower the less energetic passions by which it may be opposed. The clergyman was the first to speak. "In the name of God," he said, "receive an overture of peace from the meanest of his servants. What this honourable person demands, albeit it is urged with over violence, hath yet in it something of reason. Let him hear from Miss Lucy's own lips that she hath dutifully acceded to the will of her parents, and repenteth her of her covenant with him; and when he is assured of this, he will depart in peace unto his own dwelling, and cumber us no more. Alas! the workings of the ancient Adam are strong even in the regenerate — surely we should have long suffering with those who, being yet in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, are swept forward by the uncontrollable current of worldly passion. Let, then, the Master of Ravenswood have the interview on which he insisteth; it can but be as a passing pang to this honourable maiden, since her faith is now irrevocably pledged to the choice of her parents. Let it, I say, be thus: it belongeth to my functions to entreat your honour's compliance with this healing overture."

"Never!" answered Lady Ashton, whose rage had now overcome her first surprise and terror — "never shall this man speak in private with my

daughter, the affianced bride of another! Pass from this room who will, I remain here. I fear neither his violence nor his weapons, though some," she said, glancing a look towards Colonel Ashton, "who bear my name, appear more moved by them."

"For God's sake, madam," answered the worthy divine, "add not fuel to firebrands. The Master of Ravenswood cannot, I am sure, object to your presence, the young lady's state of health being considered, and your maternal duty. I myself will also tarry; peradventure my grey hairs may turn away wrath."

"You are welcome to do so, sir," said Ravenswood; "and Lady Ashton is also welcome to remain, if she shall think proper; but let all others depart."

"Ravenswood," said Colonel Ashton, crossing him as he went out, "you shall account for this ere long."

"When you please," replied Ravenswood.

"But I," said Bucklaw, with a half smile, "have a prior demand on your leisure, a claim of some standing."

"Arrange it as you will," said Ravenswood; "leave me but this day in peace, and I will have no dearer employment on earth, to-morrow, than to give you all the satisfaction you can desire."

The other gentlemen left the apartment; but Sir William Ashton lingered.

"Master of Ravenswood," he said, in a conciliating tone, "I think I have not deserved that you should make this scandal and outrage in my family. If you will sheathe your sword, and retire with me into my study, I will prove to you, by the most

satisfactory arguments, the inutility of your present irregular procedure" ——

"To-morrow, sir — to-morrow — to-morrow, I will hear you at length," reiterated Ravenswood, interrupting him; "this day hath its own sacred and indispensable business."

He pointed to the door, and Sir William left the apartment.

Ravenswood sheathed his sword, uncocked and returned his pistol to his belt, walked deliberately to the door of the apartment, which he bolted — returned, raised his hat from his forehead, and, gazing upon Lucy with eyes in which an expression of sorrow overcame their late fierceness, spread his dishevelled locks back from his face, and said, "Do you know me, Miss Ashton? — I am still Edgar Ravenswood." She was silent, and he went on with increasing vehemence — "I am still that Edgar Ravenswood, who, for your affection, renounced the dear ties by which injured honour bound him to seek vengeance. I am that Ravenswood, who, for your sake, forgave, nay, clasped hands in friendship with the oppressor and pillager of his house — the traducer and murderer of his father."

"My daughter," answered Lady Ashton, interrupting him, "has no occasion to dispute the identity of your person; the venom of your present language is sufficient to remind her, that she speaks with the mortal enemy of her father."

"I pray you to be patient, madam," answered Ravenswood; "my answer must come from her own lips. — Once more, Miss Lucy Ashton, I am that Ravenswood to whom you granted the solemn engagement, which you now desire to retract and cancel."

Lucy's bloodless lips could only falter out the words, "It was my mother."

"She speaks truly," said Lady Ashton, "it *was* I, who, authorized alike by the laws of God and man, advised her, and concurred with her, to set aside an unhappy and precipitate engagement, and to annul it by the authority of Scripture itself."

"Scripture!" said Ravenswood, scornfully.

"Let him hear the text," said Lady Ashton, appealing to the divine, "on which you yourself, with cautious reluctance, declared the nullity of the pretended engagement insisted upon by this violent man."

The clergyman took his clasped Bible from his pocket, and read the following words: "If a woman vow a vow unto the Lord, and bind herself by a bond, being in her father's house in her youth; and her father hear her vow, and her bond wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her father shall hold his peace at her: then all her vows shall stand, and every vow wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand."

"And was it not even so with us?" interrupted Ravenswood.

"Control thy impatience, young man," answered the divine, "and hear what follows in the sacred text: — 'But if her father disallow her in the day that he heareth; not any of her vows, or of her bonds wherewith she hath bound her soul, shall stand: and the Lord shall forgive her, because her father disallowed her.'"

"And was not," said Lady Ashton, fiercely and triumphantly breaking in, — "was not ours the case stated in the holy writ? — Will this person deny, that the instant her parents heard of the

vow, or bond, by which our daughter had bound her soul, we disallowed the same in the most express terms, and informed him by writing of our determination?"

"And is this all?" said Ravenswood, looking at Lucy — "Are you willing to barter sworn faith, the exercise of free will, and the feelings of mutual affection, to this wretched hypocritical sophistry?"

"Hear him!" said Lady Ashton, looking to the clergyman — "hear the blasphemer!"

"May God forgive him," said Bide-the-bent, "and enlighten his ignorance!"

"Hear what I have sacrificed for you," said Ravenswood, still addressing Lucy, "ere you sanction what has been done in your name. The honour of an ancient family, the urgent advice of my best friends, have been in vain used to sway my resolution; neither the arguments of reason, nor the portents of superstition, have shaken my fidelity. The very dead have arisen to warn me, and their warning has been despised. Are you prepared to pierce my heart for its fidelity, with the very weapon which my rash confidence intrusted to your grasp?"

"Master of Ravenswood," said Lady Ashton, "you have asked what questions you thought fit. You see the total incapacity of my daughter to answer you. But I will reply for her, and in a manner which you cannot dispute. You desire to know whether Lucy Ashton, of her own free will, desires to annul the engagement into which she has been trepanned. You have her letter under her own hand, demanding the surrender of it; and, in yet more full evidence of her purpose, here is the contract which she has this morning subscribed, in

presence of this reverend gentleman, with Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw."

Ravenswood gazed upon the deed, as if petrified. "And it was without fraud or compulsion," said he, looking towards the clergyman, "that Miss Ashton subscribed this parchment?"

"I vouch it upon my sacred character."

"This is indeed, madam, an undeniable piece of evidence," said Ravenswood, sternly; "and it will be equally unnecessary and dishonourable to waste another word in useless remonstrance or reproach. There, madam," he said, laying down before Lucy the signed paper and the broken piece of gold — "there are the evidences of your first engagement; may you be more faithful to that which you have just formed. I will trouble you to return the corresponding tokens of my ill-placed confidence — I ought rather to say, of my egregious folly."

Lucy returned the scornful glance of her lover with a gaze, from which perception seemed to have been banished; yet she seemed partly to have understood his meaning, for she raised her hands as if to undo a blue ribbon which she wore around her neck. She was unable to accomplish her purpose, but Lady Ashton cut the ribbon asunder, and detached the broken piece of gold which Miss Ashton had till then worn concealed in her bosom; the written counterpart of the lovers' engagement she for some time had had in her own possession. With a haughty curtsy, she delivered both to Ravenswood, who was much softened when he took the piece of gold.

"And she could wear it thus," he said — speaking to himself — "could wear it in her very bosom — could wear it next to her heart — even when —

But complaint avails not," he said, dashing from his eye the tear which had gathered in it, and resuming the stern composure of his manner. He strode to the chimney, and threw into the fire the paper and piece of gold, stamping upon the coals with the heel of his boot, as if to insure their destruction. "I will be no longer," he then said, "an intruder here — Your evil wishes, and your worse offices, Lady Ashton, I will only return, by hoping these will be your last machinations against your daughter's honour and happiness.— And to you, madam," he said, addressing Lucy, "I have nothing farther to say, except to pray to God that you may not become a world's wonder for this act of wilful and deliberate perjury." — Having uttered these words, he turned on his heel, and left the apartment.

Sir William Ashton, by entreaty and authority, had detained his son and Bucklaw in a distant part of the castle, in order to prevent their again meeting with Ravenswood; but as the Master descended the great staircase, Lockhard delivered him a billet, signed Sholto Douglas Ashton, requesting to know where the Master of Ravenswood would be heard of four or five days from hence, as the writer had business of weight to settle with him, so soon as an important family event had taken place.

"Tell Colonel Ashton," said Ravenswood, composedly, "I shall be found at Wolf's Crag when his leisure serves him."

As he descended the outward stair which led from the terrace, he was a second time interrupted by Craigengelt, who, on the part of his principal, the Laird of Bucklaw, expressed a hope, that Ravenswood would not leave Scotland within ten

days at least, as he had both former and recent civilities for which to express his gratitude.

"Tell your master," said Ravenswood, fiercely, "to choose his own time. He will find me at Wolf's Crag, if his purpose is not forestalled."

"*My* master?" replied Craigengelt, encouraged by seeing Colonel Ashton and Bucklaw at the bottom of the terrace; "give me leave to say, I know of no such person upon earth, nor will I permit such language to be used to me!"

"Seek your master, then, in hell!" exclaimed Ravenswood, giving way to the passion he had hitherto restrained, and throwing Craigengelt from him with such violence, that he rolled down the steps, and lay senseless at the foot of them. — "I am a fool," he instantly added, "to vent my passion upon a caitiff so worthless."

He then mounted his horse, which at his arrival he had secured to a balustrade in front of the castle, rode very slowly past Bucklaw and Colonel Ashton, raising his hat as he passed each, and looking in their faces steadily while he offered this mute salutation, which was returned by both with the same stern gravity. Ravenswood walked on with equal deliberation until he reached the head of the avenue, as if to show that he rather courted than avoided interruption. When he had passed the upper gate, he turned his horse, and looked at the castle with a fixed eye; then set spurs to his good steed, and departed with the speed of a demon dismissed by the exorcist.

CHAPTER XIII.

> Who comes from the bridal chamber?
> It is Azrael, the angel of death.
>
> *Thalaba.*

AFTER the dreadful scene that had taken place at the castle, Lucy was transported to her own chamber, where she remained for some time in a state of absolute stupor. Yet afterwards, in the course of the ensuing day, she seemed to have recovered, not merely her spirits and resolution, but a sort of flighty levity, that was foreign to her character and situation, and which was at times chequered by fits of deep silence and melancholy, and of capricious pettishness. Lady Ashton became much alarmed, and consulted the family physicians. But as her pulse indicated no change, they could only say that the disease was on the spirits, and recommended gentle exercise and amusement. Miss Ashton never alluded to what had passed in the state-room. It seemed doubtful even if she was conscious of it, for she was often observed to raise her hands to her neck, as if in search of the ribbon that had been taken from it, and mutter, in surprise and discontent, when she could not find it, "It was the link that bound me to life."

Notwithstanding all these remarkable symptoms, Lady Ashton was too deeply pledged, to delay her daughter's marriage even in her present state of health. It cost her much trouble to keep up the

fair side of appearances towards Bucklaw. She was well aware, that if he once saw any reluctance on her daughter's part, he would break off the treaty, to her great personal shame and dishonour. She therefore resolved, that, if Lucy continued passive, the marriage should take place upon the day that had been previously fixed, trusting that a change of place, of situation, and of character, would operate a more speedy and effectual cure upon the unsettled spirits of her daughter, than could be attained by the slow measures which the medical men recommended. Sir William Ashton's views of family aggrandisement, and his desire to strengthen himself against the measures of the Marquis of A——, readily induced him to acquiesce in what he could not have perhaps resisted if willing to do so. As for the young men, Bucklaw and Colonel Ashton, they protested, that after what had happened, it would be most dishonourable to postpone for a single hour the time appointed for the marriage, as it would be generally ascribed to their being intimidated by the intrusive visit and threats of Ravenswood.

Bucklaw would indeed have been incapable of such precipitation, had he been aware of the state of Miss Ashton's health, or rather of her mind. But custom, upon these occasions, permitted only brief and sparing intercourse between the bridegroom and the betrothed; a circumstance so well improved by Lady Ashton, that Bucklaw neither saw nor suspected the real state of the health and feelings of his unhappy bride.

On the eve of the bridal day, Lucy appeared to have one of her fits of levity, and surveyed with a degree of girlish interest the various preparations

of dress, &c. &c., which the different members of the family had prepared for the occasion.

The morning dawned bright and cheerily. The bridal guests assembled in gallant troops from distant quarters. Not only the relations of Sir William Ashton, and the still more dignified connexions of his lady, together with the numerous kinsmen and allies of the bridegroom, were present upon this joyful ceremony, gallantly mounted, arrayed, and caparisoned, but almost every presbyterian family of distinction, within fifty miles, made a point of attendance upon an occasion which was considered as giving a sort of triumph over the Marquis of A——, in the person of his kinsman. Splendid refreshments awaited the guests on their arrival, and after these were finished, the cry was to horse. The bride was led forth betwixt her brother Henry and her mother. Her gaiety of the preceding day had given rise to a deep shade of melancholy, which, however, did not misbecome an occasion so momentous. There was a light in her eyes, and a colour in her cheek, which had not been kindled for many a day, and which, joined to her great beauty, and the splendour of her dress, occasioned her entrance to be greeted with an universal murmur of applause, in which even the ladies could not refrain from joining. While the cavalcade were getting to horse, Sir William Ashton, a man of peace and of form, censured his son Henry for having begirt himself with a military sword of preposterous length, belonging to his brother, Colonel Ashton.

"If you must have a weapon," he said, "upon such a peaceful occasion, why did you not use the short poniard sent from Edinburgh on purpose?"

The boy vindicated himself, by saying it was lost.

"You put it out of the way yourself, I suppose," said his father, "out of ambition to wear that preposterous thing, which might have served Sir William Wallace — But never mind, get to horse now, and take care of your sister."

The boy did so, and was placed in the centre of the gallant train. At the time, he was too full of his own appearance, his sword, his laced cloak, his feathered hat, and his managed horse, to pay much regard to any thing else; but he afterwards remembered to the hour of his death, that when the hand of his sister, by which she supported herself on the pillion behind him, touched his own, it felt as wet and cold as sepulchral marble.

Glancing wide over hill and dale, the fair bridal procession at last reached the parish church, which they nearly filled; for, besides domestics, above a hundred gentlemen and ladies were present upon the occasion. The marriage ceremony was performed according to the rites of the Presbyterian persuasion, to which Bucklaw of late had judged it proper to conform.

On the outside of the church, a liberal dole was distributed to the poor of the neighbouring parishes, under the direction of Johnny Mortheuch, who had lately been promoted from his desolate quarters at the Hermitage, to fill the more eligible situation of sexton at the parish church of Ravenswood. Dame Gourlay, with two of her contemporaries, the same who assisted at Alice's late-wake, seated apart upon a flat monument, or *through-stane*, sate enviously comparing the shares which had been allotted to them in dividing the dole.

"Johnny Mortheuch," said Annie Winnie, "might

hae minded auld lang syne, and thought of his auld kimmers, for as braw as he is with his new black coat. I hae gotten but five herring instead o' sax, and this disna look like a gude saxpennys, and I daresay this bit morsel o' beef is an unce lighter than ony that's been dealt round; and it's a bit o' the tenony hough, mair by token, that yours, Maggie, is out o' the back sey."

"Mine, quo' she?" mumbled the paralytic hag, "mine is half banes, I trow. If grit folk gie poor bodies ony thing for coming to their weddings and burials, it suld be something that wad do them gude, I think."

"Their gifts," said Ailsie Gourlay, "are dealt for nae love of us — nor out of respect for whether we feed or starve. They wad gie us whinstanes for loaves, if it would serve their ain vanity, and yet they expect us to be as gratefu', as they ca' it, as if they served us for true love and liking."

"And that's truly said," answered her companion.

"But, Ailsie Gourlay, ye're the auldest o' us three, did ye ever see a mair grand bridal?"

"I winna say that I have," answered the hag; "but I think soon to see as braw a burial."

"And that wad please me as weel," said Annie Winnie; "for there's as large a dole, and folk are no obliged to girn and laugh, and mak murgeons, and wish joy to these hellicat quality, that lord it ower us like brute beasts. I like to pack the dead-dole in my lap, and rin ower my auld rhyme, —

'My loaf in my lap, my penny in my purse,
Thou art ne'er the better, and I'm ne'er the worse.'"[1]

[1] Reginald Scott tells of an old woman who performed so many cures by means of a charm, that she was suspected of witchcraft. Her mode of practice being enquired into, it was found, that the

"That's right, Annie," said the paralytic woman; "God send us a green Yule and a fat kirkyard!"

"But I wad like to ken, Lucky Gourlay, for ye're the auldest and wisest amang us, whilk o' these revellers' turns it will be to be streckit first?"

"D'ye see yon dandilly maiden," said Dame Gourlay, "a' glistenin' wi' goud and jewels, that they are lifting up on the white horse behind that harebrained callant in scarlet, wi' the lang sword at his side?"

"But that's the bride!" said her companion, her cold heart touched with some sort of compassion; "that's the very bride hersell! Eh, whow! sae young, sae braw, and sae bonny — and is her time sae short?"

"I tell ye," said the sibyl, "her winding sheet is up as high as her throat already, (*d*) believe it wha list. Her sand has but few grains to rin out, and nae wonder — they've been weel shaken. The leaves are withering fast on the trees, but she'll never see the Martinmas wind gar them dance in swirls like the fairy rings."

"Ye waited on her for a quarter," said the paralytic woman, "and got twa red pieces, or I am far beguiled."

"Ay, ay," answered Ailsie, with a bitter grin; "and Sir William Ashton promised me a bonny red gown to the boot o' that — a stake, and a chain, and a tar barrel, lass! — what think ye o' that for a propine? — for being up early and doun late for fourscore nights and mair wi' his dwining daughter. But he may keep it for his ain leddy, cummers."

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only fee which she would accept of, was a loaf of bread and a silver penny; and that the potent charm with which she wrought so many cures, was the doggerel couplet in the text.

"I hae heard a sough," said Annie Winnie, "as if Leddy Ashton was nae canny body."

"D'ye see her yonder," said Dame Gourlay, "as she prances on her grey gelding out at the kirkyard? — there's mair o' utter deevilry in that woman, as brave and fair-fashioned as she rides yonder, than in a' the Scotch witches that ever flew by moonlight ower North-Berwick Law."

"What's that ye say about witches, ye damned hags?" said Johnny Mortheuch; "are ye casting yer cantrips in the very kirkyard, to mischieve the bride and bridegroom? Get awa hame, for if I tak my souple t'ye, I'll gar ye find the road faster than ye wad like."

"Hech, sirs!" answered Ailsie Gourlay; "how bra' are we wi' our new black coat and our weel-pouthered head, as if we had never kend hunger nor thirst oursells! and we'll be screwing up our bit fiddle, doubtless, in the ha' the night, amang a' the other elbo'-jiggers for miles round. Let's see if the pins haud, Johnny — that's a', lad."

"I take ye a' to witness, gude people," said Mortheuch, "that she threatens me wi' mischief, and forespeaks me. If ony thing but gude happens to me or my fiddle this night, I'll make it the blackest night's job she ever stirred in. I'll hae her before Presbytery and Synod — I'm half a minister mysell, now that I'm a bedral in an inhabited parish."

Although the mutual hatred betwixt these hags and the rest of mankind had steeled their hearts against all impressions of festivity, this was by no means the case with the multitude at large. The splendour of the bridal retinue — the gay dresses — the spirited horses — the blithesome appearance of

the handsome women and gallant gentlemen assembled upon the occasion, had the usual effect upon the minds of the populace. The repeated shouts, of "Ashton and Bucklaw for ever!" — the discharge of pistols, guns, and musketoons, to give what was called the bridal-shot, evinced the interest the people took in the occasion of the cavalcade, as they accompanied it upon their return to the castle. If there was here and there an elder peasant or his wife who sneered at the pomp of the upstart family, and remembered the days of the long-descended Ravenswoods, even they, attracted by the plentiful cheer which the castle that day afforded to rich and poor, held their way thither, and acknowledged, notwithstanding their prejudices, the influence of *l'Amphitrion où l'on dîne.*

Thus accompanied with the attendance both of rich and poor, Lucy returned to her father's house. Bucklaw used his privilege of riding next to the bride, but, new to such a situation, rather endeavoured to attract attention by the display of his person and horsemanship, than by any attempt to address her in private. They reached the castle in safety, amid a thousand joyous acclamations.

It is well known, that the weddings of ancient days were celebrated with a festive publicity rejected by the delicacy of modern times. The marriage-guests, on the present occasion, were regaled with a banquet of unbounded profusion, the relics of which, after the domestics had feasted in their turn, were distributed among the shouting crowd, with as many barrels of ale as made the hilarity without correspond to that within the castle. The gentlemen, according to the fashion of the times, indulged, for the most part, in deep draughts of

the richest wines, while the ladies, prepared for the ball which always closed a bridal entertainment, impatiently expected their arrival in the state gallery. At length the social party broke up at a late hour, and the gentlemen crowded into the saloon, where, enlivened by wine and the joyful occasion, they laid aside their swords, and handed their impatient partners to the floor. The music already rung from the gallery, along the fretted roof of the ancient state apartment. According to strict etiquette, the bride ought to have opened the ball, but Lady Ashton, making an apology on account of her daughter's health, offered her own hand to Bucklaw as substitute for her daughter's.

But as Lady Ashton raised her head gracefully, expecting the strain at which she was to begin the dance, she was so much struck by an unexpected alteration in the ornaments of the apartment, that she was surprised into an exclamation, — "Who has dared to change the pictures?"

All looked up, and those who knew the usual state of the apartment, observed, with surprise, that the picture of Sir William Ashton's father was removed from its place, and in its stead that of old Sir Malise Ravenswood seemed to frown wrath and vengeance upon the party assembled below. The exchange must have been made while the apartments were empty, but had not been observed until the torches and lights in the sconces were kindled for the ball. The haughty and heated spirits of the gentlemen led them to demand an immediate enquiry into the cause of what they deemed an affront to their host and to themselves; but Lady Ashton, recovering herself, passed it over as the freak of a crazy wench who was maintained about the castle,

and whose susceptible imagination had been observed to be much affected by the stories which Dame Gourlay delighted to tell concerning "the former family," so Lady Ashton named the Ravenswoods. The obnoxious picture was immediately removed, and the ball was opened by Lady Ashton, with a grace and dignity which supplied the charms of youth, and almost verified the extravagant encomiums of the elder part of the company, who extolled her performance as far exceeding the dancing of the rising generation.

When Lady Ashton sat down, she was not surprised to find that her daughter had left the apartment, and she herself followed, eager to obviate any impression which might have been made upon her nerves by an incident so likely to affect them as the mysterious transposition of the portraits. Apparently she found her apprehensions groundless, for she returned in about an hour, and whispered the bridegroom, who extricated himself from the dancers, and vanished from the apartment. The instruments now played their loudest strains — the dancers pursued their exercise with all the enthusiasm inspired by youth, mirth, and high spirits, when a cry was heard so shrill and piercing, as at once to arrest the dance and the music. All stood motionless; but when the yell was again repeated, Colonel Ashton snatched a torch from the sconce, and demanding the key of the bridal-chamber from Henry, to whom, as bride's-man, it had been intrusted, rushed thither, followed by Sir William and Lady Ashton, and one or two others, near relations of the family. The bridal guests waited their return in stupified amazement.

Arrived at the door of the apartment, Colonel

Ashton knocked and called, but received no answer except stifled groans. He hesitated no longer to open the door of the apartment, in which he found opposition from something which lay against it. When he had succeeded in opening it, the body of the bridegroom was found lying on the threshold of the bridal chamber, and all around was flooded with blood. A cry of surprise and horror was raised by all present; and the company, excited by this new alarm, began to rush tumultuously towards the sleeping apartment. Colonel Ashton, first whispering to his mother, — "Search for her — she has murdered him!" drew his sword, planted himself in the passage, and declared he would suffer no man to pass excepting the clergyman, and a medical person present. By their assistance, Bucklaw, who still breathed, was raised from the ground, and transported to another apartment, where his friends, full of suspicion and murmuring, assembled round him to learn the opinion of the surgeon.

In the meanwhile, Lady Ashton, her husband, and their assistants, in vain sought Lucy in the bridal bed and in the chamber. There was no private passage from the room, and they began to think that she must have thrown herself from the window, when one of the company, holding his torch lower than the rest, discovered something white in the corner of the great old-fashioned chimney of the apartment. Here they found the unfortunate girl, seated, or rather couched like a hare upon its form — her head-gear dishevelled; her night-clothes torn and dabbled with blood, — her eyes glazed, and her features convulsed into a wild paroxysm of insanity. When she saw herself discovered, she gibbered, made mouths, and pointed at them with her bloody

fingers, with the frantic gestures of an exulting demoniac.

Female assistance was now hastily summoned; the unhappy bride was overpowered, not without the use of some force. As they carried her over the threshold, she looked down, and uttered the only articulate words that she had yet spoken, saying, with a sort of grinning exultation, — "So, you have ta'en up your bonny bridegroom?" She was by the shuddering assistants conveyed to another and more retired apartment, where she was secured as her situation required, and closely watched. The unutterable agony of the parents — the horror and confusion of all who were in the castle — the fury of contending passions between the friends of the different parties, passions augmented by previous intemperance, surpass description.

The surgeon was the first who obtained something like a patient hearing; he pronounced that the wound of Bucklaw, though severe and dangerous, was by no means fatal, but might readily be rendered so by disturbance and hasty removal. This silenced the numerous party of Bucklaw's friends, who had previously insisted that he should, at all rates, be transported from the castle to the nearest of their houses. They still demanded, however, that, in consideration of what had happened, four of their number should remain to watch over the sick-bed of their friend, and that a suitable number of their domestics, well armed, should also remain in the castle. This condition being acceded to on the part of Colonel Ashton and his father, the rest of the bridegroom's friends left the castle, notwithstanding the hour and the darkness of the night. The cares of the medical man were next

employed in behalf of Miss Ashton, whom he pronounced to be in a very dangerous state. Farther medical assistance was immediately summoned. All night she remained delirious. On the morning, she fell into a state of absolute insensibility. The next evening, the physicians said, would be the crisis of her malady. It proved so; for although she awoke from her trance with some appearance of calmness, and suffered her night-clothes to be changed, or put in order, yet so soon as she put her hand to her neck, as if to search for the fatal blue ribbon, a tide of recollections seemed to rush upon her, which her mind and body were alike incapable of bearing. Convulsion followed convulsion, till they closed in death, without her being able to utter a word explanatory of the fatal scene.

The provincial judge of the district arrived the day after the young lady had expired, and executed, though with all possible delicacy to the afflicted family, the painful duty of enquiring into this fatal transaction. But there occurred nothing to explain the general hypothesis, that the bride, in a sudden fit of insanity, had stabbed the bridegroom at the threshold of the apartment. The fatal weapon was found in the chamber, smeared with blood. It was the same poniard which Henry should have worn on the wedding-day, and which his unhappy sister had probably contrived to secrete on the succeeding evening, when it had been shown to her among other articles of preparation for the wedding.

The friends of Bucklaw expected that on his recovery he would throw some light upon this dark story, and eagerly pressed him with enquiries, which for some time he evaded under pretext of weakness. When, however, he had been transported to his

own house, and was considered as in a state of convalescence, he assembled those persons, both male and female, who had considered themselves as entitled to press him on this subject, and returned them thanks for the interest they had exhibited in his behalf, and their offers of adherence and support. "I wish you all," he said, "my friends, to understand, however, that I have neither story to tell, nor injuries to avenge. If a lady shall question me henceforward upon the incidents of that unhappy night, I shall remain silent, and in future consider her as one who has shown herself desirous to break off her friendship with me; in a word, I will never speak to her again. But if a gentleman shall ask me the same question, I shall regard the incivility as equivalent to an invitation to meet him in the Duke's Walk,[1] and I expect that he will rule himself accordingly."

A declaration so decisive admitted no commentary; and it was soon after seen that Bucklaw had arisen from the bed of sickness a sadder and a wiser man than he had hitherto shown himself. He dismissed Craigengelt from his society, but not without such a provision as, if well employed, might secure him against indigence, and against temptation.

Bucklaw afterwards went abroad, and never returned to Scotland; nor was he known ever to hint at the circumstances attending his fatal marriage. By many readers this may be deemed overstrained, romantic, and composed by the wild imagination of an author, desirous of gratifying the

[1] A walk in the vicinity of Holyrood-house, so called, because often frequented by the Duke of York, afterwards James II., during his residence in Scotland. It was for a long time the usual place of rendezvous for settling affairs of honour.

popular appetite for the horrible; but those who are read in the private family history of Scotland during the period in which the scene is laid, will readily discover, through the disguise of borrowed names and added incidents, the leading particulars of AN OWER TRUE TALE.

CHAPTER XIV.

Whose mind's so marbled, and his heart so hard,
That would not, when this huge mishap was heard,
To th' utmost note of sorrow set their song,
To see a gallant, with so great a grace,
So suddenly unthought on, so o'erthrown,
And so to perish, in so poor a place,
By too rash riding in a ground unknown!

Poem, in Nisbet's Heraldry, Vol. II.

We have anticipated the course of time to mention Bucklaw's recovery and fate, that we might not interrupt the detail of events which succeeded the funeral of the unfortunate Lucy Ashton. This melancholy ceremony was performed in the misty dawn of an autumnal morning, with such moderate attendance and ceremony as could not possibly be dispensed with. A very few of the nearest relations attended her body to the same churchyard to which she had so lately been led as a bride, with as little free will, perhaps, as could be now testified by her lifeless and passive remains. An aisle adjacent to the church had been fitted up by Sir William Ashton as a family cemetery; and here, in a coffin bearing neither name nor date, were consigned to dust the remains of what was once lovely, beautiful, and innocent, though exasperated to frenzy by a long tract of unremitting persecution. While the mourners were busy in the vault, the three village hags, who, notwithstanding the unwonted earliness of the hour, had snuffed the carrion like vultures,

were seated on the "through-stane," and engaged in their wonted unhallowed conference.

"Did not I say," said Dame Gourlay, "that the braw bridal would be followed by as braw a funeral?"

"I think," answered Dame Winnie, "there's little bravery at it; neither meat nor drink, and just a wheen silver tippences to the poor folk; it was little worth while to come sae far road for sae sma' profit, and us sae frail."

"Out, wretch!" replied Dame Gourlay, "can a' the dainties they could gie us be half sae sweet as this hour's vengeance? There they are that were capering on their prancing nags four days since, and they are now ganging as dreigh and sober as oursells the day. They were a' glistening wi' gowd and silver — they're now as black as the crook. And Miss Lucy Ashton, that grudged when an honest woman came near her, a taid may sit on her coffin the day, and she can never scunner when he croaks. And Lady Ashton has hell-fire burning in her breast by this time; and Sir William, wi' his gibbets, and his faggots, and his chains, how likes he the witcheries of his ain dwelling-house?"

"And is it true, then," mumbled the paralytic wretch, "that the bride was trailed out of her bed and up the chimley by evil spirits, and that the bridegroom's face was wrung round ahint him?"

"Ye needna care wha did it, or how it was done," said Ailsie Gourlay; "but I'll uphaud it for nae stickit[1] job, and that the lairds and leddies ken weel this day."

"And was it true," said Annie Winnie, "sin ye ken sae mickle about it, that the picture of Auld Sir

[1] *Stickit*, imperfect.

Malise Ravenswood came down on the ha' floor, and led out the brawl before them a'?"

"Na," said Ailsie; "but into the ha' came the picture — and I ken weel how it came there — to gie them a warning that pride would get a fa'. But there's as queer a ploy, cummers, as ony o' thae, that's gaun on even now in the burial vault yonder — ye saw twall mourners, wi' crape and cloke, gang down the steps pair and pair?"

"What should ail us to see them?" said the one old woman.

"I counted them," said the other, with the eagerness of a person to whom the spectacle had afforded too much interest to be viewed with indifference.

"But ye did not see," said Ailsie, exulting in her superior observation, "that there's a thirteenth amang them that they ken naething about; and, if auld freets say true, there's ane o' that company that'll no be lang for this warld. But come awa, cummers; if we bide here, I'se warrant we get the wyte o' whatever ill comes of it, and that gude will come of it nane o' them need ever think to see."

And thus, croaking like the ravens when they anticipate pestilence, the ill-boding sibyls withdrew from the churchyard.

In fact, the mourners, when the service of interment was ended, discovered that there was among them one more than the invited number, and the remark was communicated in whispers to each other. The suspicion fell upon a figure, which, muffled in the same deep mourning with the others, was reclined, almost in a state of insensibility, against one of the pillars of the sepulchral vault. The relatives of the Ashton family were expressing in whispers

their surprise and displeasure at the intrusion, when they were interrupted by Colonel Ashton, who, in his father's absence, acted as principal mourner. "I know," he said in a whisper, "who this person is; he has, or shall soon have, as deep cause of mourning as ourselves — leave me to deal with him, and do not disturb the ceremony by unnecessary exposure." So saying, he separated himself from the group of his relations, and taking the unknown mourner by the cloak, he said to him, in a tone of suppressed emotion, "Follow me."

The stranger, as if starting from a trance at the sound of his voice, mechanically obeyed, and they ascended the broken ruinous stair which led from the sepulchre into the churchyard. The other mourners followed, but remained grouped together at the door of the vault, watching with anxiety the motions of Colonel Ashton and the stranger, who now appeared to be in close conference beneath the shade of a yew-tree, in the most remote part of the burial-ground.

To this sequestered spot Colonel Ashton had guided the stranger, and then turning round, addressed him in a stern and composed tone. — "I cannot doubt that I speak to the Master of Ravenswood?" No answer was returned. "I cannot doubt," resumed the Colonel, trembling with rising passion, "that I speak to the murderer of my sister?"

"You have named me but too truly," said Ravenswood, in a hollow and tremulous voice.

"If you repent what you have done," said the Colonel, "may your penitence avail you before God; with me it shall serve you nothing. Here," he said, giving a paper, "is the measure of my sword, and a memorandum of the time and place of meeting. Sun-

rise to-morrow morning, on the links to the east of Wolf's-hope."

The Master of Ravenswood held the paper in his hand, and seemed irresolute. At length he spoke — "Do not," he said, "urge to farther desperation a wretch who is already desperate. Enjoy your life while you can, and let me seek my death from another."

"That you never, never shall!" said Douglas Ashton. "You shall die by my hand, or you shall complete the ruin of my family by taking my life. If you refuse my open challenge, there is no advantage I will not take of you, no indignity with which I will not load you, until the very name of Ravenswood shall be the sign of every thing that is dishonourable, as it is already of all that is villainous."

"That it shall never be," said Ravenswood, fiercely; "if I am the last who must bear it, I owe it to those who once owned it, that the name shall be extinguished without infamy. I accept your challenge, time, and place of meeting. We meet, I presume, alone?"

"Alone we meet," said Colonel Ashton, "and alone will the survivor of us return from that place of rendezvous."

"Then God have mercy on the soul of him who falls!" said Ravenswood.

"So be it!" said Colonel Ashton; "so far can my charity reach even for the man I hate most deadly, and with the deepest reason. Now, break off, for we shall be interrupted. The links by the sea-shore to the east of Wolf's-hope — the hour, sunrise — our swords our only weapons."

"Enough," said the Master, "I will not fail you."

They separated; Colonel Ashton joining the rest

of the mourners, and the Master of Ravenswood taking his horse, which was tied to a tree behind the church. Colonel Ashton returned to the castle with the funeral guests, but found a pretext for detaching himself from them in the evening, when, changing his dress to a riding habit, he rode to Wolf's-hope that night, and took up his abode in the little inn, in order that he might be ready for his rendezvous in the morning.

It is not known how the Master of Ravenswood disposed of the rest of that unhappy day. Late at night, however, he arrived at Wolf's-Crag, and aroused his old domestic, Caleb Balderstone, who had ceased to expect his return. Confused and flying rumours of the late tragical death of Miss Ashton, and of its mysterious cause, had already reached the old man, who was filled with the utmost anxiety, on account of the probable effect these events might produce upon the mind of his master.

The conduct of Ravenswood did not alleviate his apprehensions. To the butler's trembling entreaties, that he would take some refreshment, he at first returned no answer, and then suddenly and fiercely demanding wine, he drank, contrary to his habits, a very large draught. Seeing that his master would eat nothing, the old man affectionately entreated that he would permit him to light him to his chamber. It was not until the request was three or four times repeated, that Ravenswood made a mute sign of compliance. But when Balderstone conducted him to an apartment which had been comfortably fitted up, and which, since his return, he had usually occupied, Ravenswood stopped short on the threshold.

"Not here," said he, sternly; "show me the room

in which my father died; the room in which SHE slept the night they were at the castle."

"Who, sir?" said Caleb, too terrified to preserve his presence of mind.

"*She*, Lucy Ashton!—would you kill me, old man, by forcing me to repeat her name?"

Caleb would have said something of the disrepair of the chamber, but was silenced by the irritable impatience which was expressed in his master's countenance; he lighted the way trembling and in silence, placed the lamp on the table of the deserted room, and was about to attempt some arrangement of the bed, when his master bid him begone in a tone that admitted of no delay. The old man retired, not to rest, but to prayer; and from time to time crept to the door of the apartment, in order to find out whether Ravenswood had gone to repose. His measured heavy step upon the floor was only interrupted by deep groans; and the repeated stamps of the heel of his heavy boot, intimated too clearly, that the wretched inmate was abandoning himself at such moments to paroxysms of uncontrolled agony. The old man thought that the morning, for which he longed, would never have dawned; but time, whose course rolls on with equal current, however it may seem more rapid or more slow to mortal apprehension, brought the dawn at last, and spread a ruddy light on the broad verge of the glistening ocean. It was early in November, and the weather was serene for the season of the year. But an easterly wind had prevailed during the night, and the advancing tide rolled nearer than usual to the foot of the crags on which the castle was founded.

With the first peep of light, Caleb Balderstone again resorted to the door of Ravenswood's sleeping

apartment, through a chink of which he observed him engaged in measuring the length of two or three swords which lay in a closet adjoining to the apartment. He muttered to himself, as he selected one of these weapons, "It is shorter — let him have this advantage, as he has every other."

Caleb Balderstone knew too well, from what he witnessed, upon what enterprise his master was bound, and how vain all interference on his part must necessarily prove. He had but time to retreat from the door, so nearly was he surprised by his master suddenly coming out, and descending to the stables. The faithful domestic followed; and, from the dishevelled appearance of his master's dress, and his ghastly looks, was confirmed in his conjecture that he had passed the night without sleep or repose. He found him busily engaged in saddling his horse, a service from which Caleb, though with faltering voice and trembling hands, offered to relieve him. Ravenswood rejected his assistance by a mute sign, and having led the animal into the court, was just about to mount him, when the old domestic's fear giving way to the strong attachment which was the principal passion of his mind, he flung himself suddenly at Ravenswood's feet, and clasped his knees, while he exclaimed, "Oh, sir! oh, master! kill me if you will, but do not go out on this dreadful errand! Oh! my dear master, wait but this day — the Marquis of A—— comes to-morrow, and a' will be remedied."

"You have no longer a master, Caleb," said Ravenswood, endeavoring to extricate himself; "why, old man, would you cling to a falling tower?"

"But I *have* a master," cried Caleb, still holding him fast, "while the heir of Ravenswood breathes.

I am but a servant; but I was born your father's — your grandfather's servant — I was born for the family — I have lived for them — I would die for them! — Stay but at home, and all will be well!"

"Well, fool! well?" said Ravenswood; "vain old man, nothing hereafter in life will be well with me, and happiest is the hour that shall soonest close it!"

So saying, he extricated himself from the old man's hold, threw himself on his horse, and rode out at the gate; but instantly turning back, he threw towards Caleb, who hastened to meet him, a heavy purse of gold.

"Caleb!" he said, with a ghastly smile, "I make you my executor;" and again turning his bridle, he resumed his course down the hill.

The gold fell unheeded on the pavement, for the old man ran to observe the course which was taken by his master, who turned to the left down a small and broken path, which gained the seashore through a cleft in the rock, and led to a sort of cove, where, in former times, the boats of the castle were wont to be moored. Observing him take this course, Caleb hastened to the eastern battlement, which commanded the prospect of the whole sands, very near as far as the village of Wolf's-hope. He could easily see his master riding in that direction, as fast as the horse could carry him. The prophecy at once rushed on Balderstone's mind, that the Lord of Ravenswood should perish on the Kelpie's Flow, which lay half way betwixt the tower and the links, or sand knolls, to the northward of Wolf's-hope. He saw him accordingly reach the fatal spot, but he never saw him pass further.

Colonel Ashton, frantic for revenge, was already in the field, pacing the turf with eagerness, and

looking with impatience towards the tower for the arrival of his antagonist. The sun had now risen, and showed its broad disk above the eastern sea, so that he could easily discern the horseman who rode towards him with speed which argued impatience equal to his own. At once the figure became invisible, as if it had melted into the air. He rubbed his eyes, as if he had witnessed an apparition, and then hastened to the spot, near which he was met by Balderstone, who came from the opposite direction. No trace whatever of horse or rider could be discerned; it only appeared, that the late winds and high tides had greatly extended the usual bounds of the quicksand, and that the unfortunate horseman, as appeared from the hoof-tracks, in his precipitated haste, had not attended to keep on the firm sands on the foot of the rock, but had taken the shortest and most dangerous course. One only vestige of his fate appeared. A large sable feather had been detached from his hat, and the rippling waves of the rising tide wafted it to Caleb's feet. The old man took it up, dried it, and placed it in his bosom.

The inhabitants of Wolf's-hope were now alarmed, and crowded to the place, some on shore, and some in boats, but their search availed nothing. The tenacious depths of the quicksand, as is usual in such cases, retained its prey.

Our tale draws to a conclusion. The Marquis of A——, alarmed at the frightful reports that were current, and anxious for his kinsman's safety, arrived on the subsequent day to mourn his loss; and, after renewing in vain a search for the body, returned, to forget what had happened amid the bustle of politics and state affairs.

Not so Caleb Balderstone. If worldly profit

could have consoled the old man, his age was better provided for than his earlier years had ever been; but life had lost to him its salt and its savour. His whole course of ideas, his feelings, whether of pride or of apprehension, of pleasure or of pain, had all arisen from his close connexion with the family which was now extinguished. He held up his head no longer — forsook all his usual haunts and occupations, and seemed only to find pleasure in moping about those apartments in the old castle, which the Master of Ravenswood had last inhabited. He ate without refreshment, and slumbered without repose; and, with a fidelity sometimes displayed by the canine race, but seldom by human beings, he pined and died within a year after the catastrophe which we have narrated.

The family of Ashton did not long survive that of Ravenswood. Sir William Ashton outlived his eldest son, the Colonel, who was slain in a duel in Flanders; and Henry, by whom he was succeeded, died unmarried. Lady Ashton (*e*) lived to the verge of extreme old age, the only survivor of the group of unhappy persons, whose misfortunes were owing to her implacability. That she might internally feel compunction, and reconcile herself with Heaven whom she had offended, we will not, and we dare not, deny; but to those around her, she did not evince the slightest symptom either of repentance or remorse. In all external appearance, she bore the same bold, haughty, unbending character, which she had displayed before these unhappy events. A splendid marble monument records her name, titles, and virtues, while her victims remain undistinguished by tomb or epitaph.

EDITOR'S NOTES.

(*a*) p. 6. "Running footmen." A curious example of their speed is given by Wodrow in a story of Archbishop Sharpe's wraith. Sharpe was in Edinburgh, and wanted some papers which he had left in the bureau of his study at St. Andrews. He lived in an old house, a relic of the conventual establishment, whereof one gateway may still be seen on the right-hand side of the road from St. Leonard's to the harbour. He therefore sent his running footman to St. Andrews for the papers, and the man, leaving Edinburgh at ten in the morning, reached the Palace at four in the afternoon. The distance is forty-two miles, and there is the Firth of Forth to cross by boat. The pace, therefore, is excellent. When the footman opened the door of the study, he saw the Archbishop seated at the bureau. "You have ridden fast, my lord," he said; "I did not see you pass me on the way!" The appearance rose, with a forbidding countenance, and walked to the stairs, where the steward also saw it. Then it vanished. Wodrow has a tale of a ghost in the same house which frightened Sharpe's successor.

(*b*) p. 31. Festivities at the Dirgie, or Wake. These are still customary in parts of Scotland. There is a story of a man who, after drinking well at the funeral feast, arose and proposed "the health of the Bride and Bridegroom." Some one pulled him down. "Man, do ye no ken where ye are?" "Weel, be it bridal or be it burial, *it's grand!*" Another worthy, in the spirit of Ailsie Gourlay, remarked that a bridal was all very well, "but gie me a gude solid burial."

(*c*) p. 65. "Selkirk bannocks, sweet scones, cookies, and petticoat-tails — delicacies little known to the present generation." "Petticoat-tails" are perhaps now "little known," but sweet scones and cookies, or buns, hold their own, and Sel-

kirk bannocks maintain their justly high repute. But Sir Walter is not accurate in thinking that the genuine Selkirk bannock, a kind of cake-loaf of remarkable excellence, can be made elsewhere than in the capital of his sheriffdom, the Forest. There alone the art and mystery is preserved.

(*d*) p. 143. "Her winding-sheet is up as high as her throat already." This sign of death is discussed, with other phenomena of the second sight, in notes on "A Legend of Montrose." The shroud, thus seen, occurs in the Odyssey, where Theoclymenus, the second-sighted man, says to the doomed wooers, "shrouded in night are your heads, and your shoulders and your knees" (Odyssey, xx. 353, 354).

(*e*) p. 163. It seems to have escaped the notice of genealogists that Lady Stair, in a sense the original of Lady Ashton, was a widow when she married the first Viscount Stair. Her first husband was Fergus Kennedy, as is alleged in the contract of her second marriage, dated Balcarrie, Sept. 20, 1643.

ANDREW LANG.

GLOSSARY.

A', all.
Abee, alone.
Aboon, abune, above, up.
Ae, one.
Aff, off.
Ahint, behind.
Ail, to come in the way, to prevent.
Airt, to direct; a point.
Aiver, an old broken-winded horse.
Allenarly, solely.
An, if.
Ance, once.
Andrew Ferrara, the Highland broadsword.
Ane, one.
Anent, about, concerning.
Anither, another.
Atween, between.
Auld, old.
Awa, away.
Aye, always.

Back-sey, the sirloin.
Bairn, a child.
Baith, both.
Bane, a bone.
Bannock, a scone.
Bawbee, a halfpenny.
Bedesman, a pensioner; one who prays for, or to.
Bedral, a sexton.
Beflumm, to befool.
Bicker, a wooden cup or dish.
Binna, be not.
Birling, drinking in company.
"Bite and soup," meat and drink.
"Black as the crook," a phrase applied to anything that is very black.
Blackavised, black-visaged.
Blaw, to blow.
Bleeze, blaze.
Blink, a beam, a ray.
Blithe, cheerful, happy.
Bluid, blood.
Bonny, pretty, handsome.
Bouk, body, carcass.
Bourock, a mound, a barrow, a heap of earth.
Brae, a hill.
Bravery, display, finery.
Braw, brave, fine.
Brawl, a French dance, a cotillon.
Brent, straight and smooth.
Brig, a bridge.
Bund, bound.

Ca', to call.
Callant, a young lad.
Canna, cannot.
Canny, careful, shrewd, useful; in a superstitious sense, good-conditioned, and safe to deal with.
Cantrips, tricks, vagaries.
Capote, to win all the tricks; a form of exclamation.
Carcake, a small cake.
Carle, a fellow.
Cast, lot, fate.

"Cauld be my cast," cold be my fate or lot.
"Change a leg." In the old coaching days inside passengers changed legs with the consent of their opposite neighbour.
Change-house, an inn.
Chield, a fellow.
"Clockin-hen," a setting hen.
Compleen, to complain.
Cookie, a bun.
Couldna, could not.
Cracks, conversation, boasting.
Crook, the chain for suspending a pot in old fireplaces.
Cuittle, to diddle.
Cummer, a gossip, or friend.
Cupar — "will to Cupar maun to Cupar," a wilful man must have his way.
Cutty, short.

Dandilly, noted for beauty.
Dang, drove, knocked.
"Day, the," to-day.
Dead-deal, a stretching-board for a dead body.
Deil, the devil.
Ding, to strike, to beat.
Dirk, a dagger.
Disna, does not.
Dittay, an indictment.
Donnart, stupid.
Drap, a drop.
Dreigh, dry, slow.
Drigie, funeral-company potation.
Drucken, drunken.
Dune, done.
Dung, knocked.
Dunsh, to nudge.
Dwining, declining, pining.

Eatche, an adze.
Ebb, shallow.
Ee, eye.
Een, eyes.
E'en, even, just; also, evening.
Eneugh, enough.

Failzie, to fail.
Fash, trouble.
Fat, what.
Feckless, feeble, silly
Feir, entire.
Fell, terrible.
Flee, to fly.
Flightering, transient.
Flisk, a caper, a whim.
Forbears, forefathers.
Forby, besides.
Forespeak, to bewitch, to presage evil.
"Foul thief," the devil.
Frae, from.
Freit, an omen.
Fremd, strange.
Fule, a fool.

Gae, go.
Gaed, went.
Gaisling, a gosling.
Gait, way.
Gane, gone.
Gang, to go.
Gar, to make, to oblige.
Gate, direction, place.
Gauger, an exciseman.
Gaun, going.
Gear, property.
Geizened, leaky (as a barrel from having been kept too long dry).
Gentles, gentlefolks.
Georgius, a gold noble = 6s. 8d.
Ghaist, a ghost.
Gie, give.
Gien, given.
Gif, if.
Gird, a hoop.
Girn, to grin.
Glazen, furnished with glass.
Gledging, looking askance.
Gleed, a spark, a flame.
Gleeing, squinting.
Gowd, gold.
Graith, furniture.
Grit, great.
Grund, ground.
Gude, good.
"Gude guide us!" Lord preserve us!

Gudeman, the head of the house, as applied to the husband.
Gudesire, grandfather.
Gudewife, wife; as head of the female household, landlady.

Ha', hall.
Hae, has, have.
Hale, haill, whole.
"**Hale and feir,**" whole and entire.
Hame, home.
Haud, to hold.
Heather-cow, a twig of heath.
Heezy, a hoist, swing up.
Hegh! whew!
Hellicat, giddy, devil-may-care.
Het, hot.
Hough, the thigh, a ham.
Hout! tut! "**Hout awa!**" go away!
How, a hollow.
Humlock, hemlock.
Huz, us.

Ingan, an onion.
I'se, I shall, I should.
Ither, other.

Jacobus, a gold coin = 20s.
Jess, a leather strip fixed to a hawk's leg.
Joe, a sweetheart, a darling.
"**Johnny Newcome,**" a newcomer, an upstart.
Jow, to toll.

Kailyard, a cabbage garden.
Ken, to know.
Kenna, don't know.
Kimmer, a gossip, a friend.
Kippage, passion.
Kirk, a church.
Kist, a chest, a coffin.
Kittle, to tickle, ticklish.
Knowe, a knoll.

Laird, lord of the manor, squire.
Lang, long.
Late-wake, the operation of watching over a dead body.
Law, a hill.
Leddy, a lady.
Lee, a lie.
"**Leg, change a.**" *See* **Change.**
Loon, a fellow.
Loot, allowed.
Lug, the ear.
Lungies, the loins.
Lurdane, a blockhead; **lazy.**

Mail, tax, rent.
Mailing, a small farm.
Mair, more.
"**Mair by token,**" **especially.**
Maist, most.
Mear, a mare.
Mirk, dark.
Misgie, to go wrong.
Mony, many.
"**Morn, the,**" to-morrow.
Muckle, much.
Murgeons, mouths, grimaces.
"**My certie!**" my faith!

Nae, no; **naebody, nobody; naething**, nothing.
Napery, table linen.
"**Nould I,**" would I not.

O', of.
Offcome, an apology.
Or, before.
Ou, oh.
Outby, a little way out.
Ower, over.
Oxter, the armpit.

Pand, a bed-curtain.
Peat, turf.
Peats, pets, favourites.
Peer, poor.
Pegh, to pant.
Petticoat-tails, thin shortbread cakes.
Pew, a note; phew.
Pickle, a small quantity.
Pick-maw, a species of gull.
Pine, pain; also, to punish.
Pinner, the flap of a headdress.
Pinnywinkles, the stocks.
Pins, tuning-pegs.
Pit, to put.
Pize, a term of mild execration.

Plenishing, household furniture.
Ploy, a merry-making.
Pouthered, corned, slightly salted.
Propine, a gift; also, to present.
Puir, poor.
Pyke, to pick.

Quaigh, quegh, a wooden drinking-cup.
Quean, a sprightly young woman, a flirt.
Quotha, forsooth.

Redd, to clear.
Reested, smoke-dried; jibbed.
Rin, to run.
Runlet, a small barrel.

Sae, so.
Sair, sore.
Sark, a shirt.
Saul, the soul.
Sawn, sown.
"**Saxteen pund Scots**," about 26s. sterling.
Scaud, to scold.
Sclate, slate.
Scraugh, to screech.
Screigh, shriek.
Scunner, to loath.
Sets, becomes.
Sey, back-sey, the sirloin.
Shaughle, to wear down, to shuffle.
Shouldna, should not.
Shouthers, the shoulders.
Siller, silver, money.
Sin, since.
Singles, the toes of a hawk.
Skirl, to scream.
Snap, a gingerbread biscuit.
Sneeshin, snishing, snuff.
"**Sorra a bit**," devil a bit.
Sort, to supply, to suit; also, to give a drubbing.
Sough, a whisper, a rumour.
Souple, a switch.
Spae, to foretell.
Speer, to ask.
Spunk, a spark, a match; spirit.
"**Spurs, dish of clean**," a hint, when the larder was bare, to make a raid on a neighbour's cattle.
Stickit, imperfect, broken down.
Strae, straw.
Straught, to stretch, to make straight.
Streik, to stretch.
Streakit, laid out (as in death).
Suld, should.
Sune, soon.
Swank, to strike forcibly.
Swanking, active, agile.
Swap, to swop; also, to strike soundly.
Swauk, a heavy blow.
Syne, since.

Tack, a lease, possession.
Tae, the one.
Taen, taken.
Taid, a toad.
Tass, a glass.
Tenony, stringy, sinewy.
Testors, bed-covers.
Thae, these, those.
Thraw, twist.
"**Threep, to keep one's**," to continue pertinaciously in any course.
Through-stane, a flat gravestone.
Till, to.
Timmer, timber.
Tippence, twopence.
Tither, the other.
"**Tocher good**," a dowry.
Tother, the other.
Troth, sure.
Trow, to trust, to believe.
Twa, two.
Twall, twelve
Twilt, a quilted bed-cover.
Tyne, a branch of a stag's antlers.

Umquhile, the late.
Unce, an ounce.
Unco, very, uncommon.
Uphaud, to uphold, to maintain.

Vaik, to be vacant.

Wad, would.
Wadset, a pledge, a mortgage.
Wae, woe, woful; sorry.
Wap, a smart stroke.
Ware, to spend.
Warlock, a witch.
Warst, worst.
Wasna, was not.
Wastland, west country.
Waur, worse.
Wean, an infant, a child.
Wee, little.
Weel, well.
Weid, a kind of fever.
Werena, were not.
Wha, who.
Whample, a blow.
Whaur, where.
Wheen, a few.
Whiles, sometimes, now and again.
Whilk, which.
Whin-bush, furze.
Whinger, a sword, a hanger.
Whinstane, trap or greenstone.
Whomling, turning, revolving.
Whow! an exclamation of surprise.
Wi', with.
Win, to make way, to get.
Winna, will not.
"Woollen, in the," in his winding-sheet.
Wot, to know.
Wraith, a phantom said to appear before death.
Wrang, wrong.
Wyte, responsibility.

Yill, ale
Yonder, there.
Yowl, yell.

THE END.

THE BLACK DWARF.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

TO

THE BLACK DWARF.

"THE BLACK DWARF," if we read it without knowing its history, might scarcely be taken for a work of Scott's best period, a companion and contemporary of "Old Mortality." As we saw (in the Introduction to "Old Mortality"), Scott speaks slightingly of the "Dwarf," in a letter to Lady Abercorn. The world has shared his opinion.

The circumstances which suggested the tale are familiar. It was in 1797 that Scott, with Adam Fergusson, visited his friend's father at Halyards, in Tweeddale, and there had an interview with David Ritchie, the original of his hero. Some twenty years went by before his memory recurred to David Ritchie as a possible figure in romance. "The story was intended to be longer," he says, and "the catastrophe more artificially brought out," but a critic advised him not to dwell on the theme. As has already been said, "The Black Dwarf," with "Old Mortality," were published by Murray in London, by Blackwood, then little known save as a bookseller, in Edinburgh. Constable was passed over on this occasion. "Mr. Blackwood, upon reading what seemed to him the lame and impotent conclusion of a well-begun story, did not search about for any glossy periphrasis, but at once requested James Ballantyne to inform the unknown author that such was his opinion."

He was also kind enough to suggest a better conclusion of the plot, furnished either by his own imagination or by the fancy of some literary adviser or jackal. We all know Scott's reply to Ballantyne: "I have received Blackwood's impudent proposal. God damn his soul! Tell him and his coadjutor that I belong to the Black Hussars of literature, who neither give nor receive criticism. I'll be cursed but this is the most impudent proposal that ever was made."

In spite of Scott's simple eloquence, he did give plenty of criticism, and received it too. He spoiled "St. Ronan's Well" to gratify an absurd prudery of Ballantyne's. But he did not at this time know Blackwood, the founder of a firm in which sound practical taste has been hereditary. He had no fancy for being treated like a hack, or a "hand" of a bookseller. His temper was excellent — so was that of Charles II. Yet Charles, as Lord Ailesbury tells us, once bade Monmouth "go to ——," and Scott also was capable of a round oath in face of such extraordinary provocation. Lockhart points out that Gifford and James Ballantyne agreed with Blackwood — "no less a person than Mr. Gifford," as Lockhart says. Could there be a "less person" than Gifford, who edited, if he did not write, the imbecile "Quarterly" reviews of "The Antiquary" and "Guy Mannering"? Ballantyne's "*verbatim* version" of what Scott has said is delightful. In place of "G—— d—— his soul," James put it suavely thus, "My respects to our friends the booksellers." Blackwood made a very proper and dignified reply, and the matter closed peacefully. Scott, according to Lockhart, ended by "completely adopting the opinion of honest Blackwood." Lockhart justly remarks that the story is "imperfect, and unworthy as a work of art to be placed high in the catalogue of his productions." But he remarks on the interest of its "delineation of the

dark feelings, so often connected with physical deformity," feelings which wrung the heart of Byron. Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe tells us how he laughed ir youth on seeing Scott limp wearily home to George Square from his cavalry exercise. People with natures like Sharpe's — monkey natures — may have laughed, but we cannot suppose that Scott's character was capable of being vexed by reflections on his own physical defect. Yet "The Black Dwarf" shows that he knew as well as Byron "what the bitter blasphemy of the spirit against the unkindness of nature" was like. "All this black and desolate train of reflections must have been encountered and subdued by the manly parent of 'The Black Dwarf.'" Scott, indeed, could conceive of them dramatically: that they really invaded his contented spirit one may be allowed to doubt. After all, "young Walter Scott was a comely creature," as a lady said who knew him in his early years. His defect was enough to embitter that other comely creature, Byron, but Scott had no vanity, and no self-consciousness.

The strong point of "The Black Dwarf" is, no doubt, the point on which Scott was always strongest, — the Scotch rustic dialogue, as in the opening chapter, where the remark on "long sheep" and "short sheep" betrayed his secret to the Ettrick Shepherd. Hobbie Elliot, the Border yeoman, is no unworthy companion of Dandie Dinmont. "Dick Turnbull's head that you broke, and Willie of Winton whom you shot at," remind one of that hero of Liddesdale, Fighting Charlie. "It was but twa or three hail drap, after a'. I wad let ony body do the like o't to me for a pint of brandy," is Hobbie's sufficient apology for the affair of the shooting. The Dwarf himself is an impressive, well-executed figure on the lonely moor; but perhaps an interest in him does not survive the

éclaircissement of his real name and position. The fact of David Ritchie jars with the ornaments of fancy, and the figure ceases to be real. Elshie does not impress us, to the end, as a serious and truthful study, like the Red Reiver of Westburnflat, that ignoble survivor of William of Deloraine and the earlier moss-troopers of the Debatable Land. He was born too late into too old a world: "I dinna believe there's ane now living that kens the lawful mode of following a fray across the Border. Tam o' Whittram kend a' about it; but he died in the hard winter." He knew "Black Earl Douglas' battle laws," like the Harper of "The Lay of the Last Minstrel," but the Reiver had overlived this lore. Thus he is a picturesque savage, the last of the Reivers, and Scott has an undeniable sympathy with the latest representative of Christie's Will. The following of the fray cheers the author with a reminiscence of Jamie Telfer of the Fair Dodhead. With all this part of his legend Scott is happy and at home.

The conclusion, the *éclaircissement*, is more than commonly "huddled up." Blackwood was right: the conclusion does not carry conviction with it. Scott has to do with rather melodramatic villanies, not, as in the beginning, with Border dames, who find it "sae natural to think on ane's blude relations before themsells" — a true expression of Scotch "clannishness" at its best and noblest. With the gay and gallant Mareschal Wells, a more polished Bucklaw, he is at home. He never fails when he draws a lad of high spirit and light heart. So the "strange eventful history" leaves us the richer for the gay young Jacobite who takes the plunge, and drinks the King's health, after he has heard that the game is up; for the kind and brave Hobbie Elliot and his women folk, and for some pictures of moorland and glen.

Probably the best account of the historical Dwarf, David Ritchie, and of his hardly less remarkable sister, is that given by Mr. Chambers in "Illustrations of the Author of Waverley." After the Dwarf's death "there was found an elf-stone, or small round pebble, hung by a cord of hair passed through the hole, to the head of his bed." He was very superstitious, and planted rowan-trees, which scare witches, round the spot where he had made up his mind to be buried, and his grave is beneath a rowan-tree.

The contemporary criticism of "The Black Dwarf" may, perhaps, best be stated in the terms of Hazlitt. Like Blackwood, he attacks the conclusion, of which, as we saw, Scott came to think no better than his reviewers. "There is a palpable disappointment and falling off where the interest had been worked up to the highest pitch of expectation. The gratifying of this appalling curiosity and interest was all that was not done to Sir Walter's hand; and this he has failed to do." It must be remembered that Hazlitt is carried away by a theory which he has hit on — a theory that Scott only marshalled facts and documents, and let them fight their own battle. As Hazlitt declares that the Duke of Wellington's military genius was precisely of the same kind, he destroys his argument by his illustration. "All that is gossiped in the neighbourhood, all that is handed down in print, all of which a drawing or an etching might be procured, is gathered together, and communicated to the public; what the heart whispers to itself in secret, what the imagination tells in thunder, this alone is wanting, and this is the great thing required to make good the comparison" with Shakspeare. What the heart whispered in secret to the Black Dwarf was not unheard by Scott, as the mere reading of the novel, and of Lockhart's comment, suffices to prove. Hazlitt is blaming Scott for not

doing exactly what he did, revealing the inner mind of the misanthrope. As to the lame and impotent conclusion, Shakspeare has a dozen of them. Blackwood, without being more like Shakspeare than Scott was, could suggest a better.

Hazlitt had a hearty natural appreciation of the Waverley Novels, when he was not working up an article on them, and was not thinking of Scott's politics. Then he felt compelled to say something original and something bitter. He ends his essay on Scott with a string of spiteful absurdities about his "littleness, pique, resentment, bigotry, and intolerance of contemporaries." The words are meaningless, applied to Scott. He complains that Sir Walter lives in the past, and will not look over the edge of the then present at the future. His mind "does not project itself into the world unknown, but mechanically shrinks back as from the edge of a precipice." Scott would have behaved foolishly if he had tried to write "as others use" fanciful romances of the unknown future. But he did gaze steadily over the edge of the precipice, and, as his Life and his Journal show, in the future he saw Anarchy. Was he wrong?[1]

[1] Hazlitt's essay on Scott is in "The Spirit of the Age" (second edition, 1825). Another study of Scott, Racine, and Shakspeare is in "The Plain Speaker" (London 1826).

ANDREW LANG.

INTRODUCTION

TO

THE BLACK DWARF.

THE ideal being who is here presented as residing in solitude, and haunted by a consciousness of his own deformity, and a suspicion of his being generally subjected to the scorn of his fellow-men, is not altogether imaginary. An individual existed many years since, under the author's observation, which suggested such a character. This poor unfortunate man's name was David Ritchie, a native of Tweeddale. He was the son of a labourer in the slate-quarries of Stobo, and must have been born in the mis-shapen form which he exhibited, though he sometimes imputed it to ill-usage when in infancy. He was bred a brush-maker at Edinburgh, and had wandered to several places, working at his trade, from all which he was chased by the disagreeable attention which his hideous singularity of form and face attracted wherever he came. The author understood him to say he had even been in Dublin.

Tired at length of being the object of shouts, laughter, and derision, David Ritchie resolved, like a deer hunted from the herd, to retreat to some wilderness, where he might have the least possible communi-

[NOTE.—"The Black Dwarf," as originally published, formed the first of the "Tales of My Landlord," but is placed here for the sake of convenience.]

cation with the world which scoffed at him. He settled himself, with this view, upon a patch of wild moorland at the bottom of a bank on the farm of Woodhouse, in the sequestered vale of the small river Manor, in Peebles-shire. The few people who had occasion to pass that way were much surprised, and some superstitious persons a little alarmed, to see so strange a figure as Bow'd Davie (*i. e.* Crooked David) employed in a task, for which he seemed so totally unfit, as that of erecting a house. The cottage which he built was extremely small, but the walls, as well as those of a little garden that surrounded it, were constructed with an ambitious degree of solidity, being composed of layers of large stones and turf; and some of the corner stones were so weighty, as to puzzle the spectators how such a person as the architect could possibly have raised them. In fact, David received from passengers, or those who came attracted by curiosity, a good deal of assistance; and as no one knew how much aid had been given by others, the wonder of each individual remained undiminished.

The proprietor of the ground, the late Sir James Naesmith, baronet, chanced to pass this singular dwelling, which, having been placed there without right or leave asked or given, formed an exact parallel with Falstaff's simile of a "fair house built on another's ground;" so that poor David might have lost his edifice by mistaking the property where he had erected it. Of course, the proprietor entertained no idea of exacting such a forfeiture, but readily sanctioned the harmless encroachment.

The personal description of Elshender of Mucklestane-Moor has been generally allowed to be a tolerably exact and unexaggerated portrait of David of Manor Water. He was not quite three feet and a half high, since he could stand upright in the door of his man-

sion, which was just that height. The following particulars concerning his figure and temper occur in the "Scots Magazine" for 1817, and are now understood to have been communicated by the ingenious Mr. Robert Chambers of Edinburgh, who has recorded with much spirit the traditions of the Good Town, and, in other publications, largely and agreeably added to the stock of our popular antiquities. He is the countryman of David Ritchie, and had the best access to collect anecdotes of him.

"His skull," says this authority, "which was of an oblong and rather unusual shape, was said to be of such strength, that he could strike it with ease through the panel of a door, or the end of a barrel. His laugh is said to have been quite horrible; and his screech-owl voice, shrill, uncouth, and dissonant, corresponded well with his other peculiarities.

"There was nothing very uncommon about his dress. He usually wore an old slouched hat when he went abroad; and when at home, a sort of cowl or night-cap. He never wore shoes, being unable to adapt them to his mis-shapen finlike feet, but always had both feet and legs quite concealed, and wrapt up with pieces of cloth. He always walked with a sort of pole or pike-staff, considerably taller than himself. His habits were, in many respects, singular, and indicated a mind congenial to its uncouth tabernacle. A jealous, misanthropical, and irritable temper, was his prominent characteristic. The sense of his deformity haunted him like a phantom. And the insults and scorn to which this exposed him, had poisoned his heart with fierce and bitter feelings, which, from other points in his character, do not appear to have been more largely infused into his original temperament than that of his fellow-men.

"He detested children, on account of their propensity to insult and persecute him. To strangers he was generally reserved, crabbed, and surly; and though he by no means refused assistance or charity, he seldom either expressed or exhibited much gratitude. Even towards persons who had been his greatest benefactors, and who possessed the greatest share of his good-will, he frequently displayed much caprice and jeal-

ousy. A lady who had known him from his infancy, and who has furnished us in the most obliging manner with some particulars respecting him, says, that although Davie showed as much respect and attachment to her father's family, as it was in his nature to show to any, yet they were always obliged to be very cautious in their deportment towards him. One day, having gone to visit him with another lady, he took them through his garden, and was showing them, with much pride and good-humour, all his rich and tastefully assorted borders, when they happened to stop near a plot of cabbages which had been somewhat injured by the caterpillars. Davie, observing one of the ladies smile, instantly assumed his savage, scowling aspect, rushed among the cabbages, and dashed them to pieces with his *kent*, exclaiming, 'I hate the worms, for they mock me!'

"Another lady, likewise a friend and old acquaintance of his, very unintentionally gave David mortal offence on a similar occasion. Throwing back his jealous glance as he was ushering her into his garden, he fancied he observed her spit, and exclaimed, with great ferocity, 'Am I a toad, woman! that ye spit at me — that ye spit at me?' and without listening to any answer or excuse, drove her out of his garden with imprecations and insult. When irritated by persons for whom he entertained little respect, his misanthropy displayed itself in words, and sometimes in actions, of still greater rudeness; and he used on such occasions the most unusual and singularly savage imprecations and threats."[1]

Nature maintains a certain balance of good and evil in all her works; and there is no state perhaps so utterly desolate, which does not possess some source of gratification peculiar to itself. This poor man, whose misanthropy was founded in a sense of his own preternatural deformity, had yet his own particular enjoyments. Driven into solitude, he became an admirer of the beauties of nature. His garden, which he sedulously cultivated, and from a piece of wild moorland made a very productive spot, was his pride and his delight;

[1] Scots Magazine, vol 80, p 207.

but he was also an admirer of more natural beauty: the soft sweep of the green hill, the bubbling of a clear fountain, or the complexities of a wild thicket, were scenes on which he often gazed for hours, and, as he said, with inexpressible delight. It was perhaps for this reason that he was fond of Shenstone's pastorals, and some parts of Paradise Lost. The author has heard his most unmusical voice repeat the celebrated description of Paradise, which he seemed fully to appreciate. His other studies were of a different cast, chiefly polemical. He never went to the parish church, and was therefore suspected of entertaining heterodox opinions, though his objection was probably to the concourse of spectators, to whom he must have exposed his unseemly deformity. He spoke of a future state with intense feeling, and even with tears. He expressed disgust at the idea of his remains being mixed with the common rubbish, as he called it, of the churchyard, and selected with his usual taste a beautiful and wild spot in the glen where he had his hermitage, in which to take his last repose. He changed his mind, however, and was finally interred in the common burial-ground of Manor parish.

The author has invested Wise Elshie with some qualities which made him appear, in the eyes of the vulgar, a man possessed of supernatural power. Common fame paid David Ritchie a similar compliment, for some of the poor and ignorant, as well as all the children, in the neighbourhood, held him to be what is called *uncanny*. He himself did not altogether discourage the idea; it enlarged his very limited circle of power, and in so far gratified his conceit; and it soothed his misanthropy, by increasing his means of giving terror or pain. But even in a rude Scottish glen thirty years back, the fear of sorcery was very much out of date.

David Ritchie affected to frequent solitary scenes, especially such as were supposed to be haunted, and valued himself upon his courage in doing so. To be sure he had little chance of meeting any thing more ugly than himself. At heart, he was superstitious, and planted many rowans (mountain ashes) around his hut, as a certain defence against necromancy. For the same reason, doubtless, he desired to have rowan-trees set above his grave.

We have stated that David Ritchie loved objects of natural beauty. His only living favourites were a dog and a cat, to which he was particularly attached, and his bees, which he treated with great care. He took a sister, latterly, to live in a hut adjacent to his own, but he did not permit her to enter it. She was weak in intellect, but not deformed in person; simple, or rather silly, but not, like her brother, sullen or bizarre. David was never affectionate to her; it was not in his nature; but he endured her. He maintained himself and her by the sale of the produce of their garden and bee-hives; and, latterly, they had a small allowance from the parish. Indeed, in the simple and patriarchal state in which the country then was, persons in the situation of David and his sister were sure to be supported. They had only to apply to the next gentleman or respectable farmer, and were sure to find them equally ready and willing to supply their very moderate wants. David often received gratuities from strangers, which he never asked, never refused, and never seemed to consider as an obligation. He had a right, indeed, to regard himself as one of Nature's paupers, to whom she gave a title to be maintained by his kind, even by that deformity which closed against him all ordinary ways of supporting himself by his own labour. Besides, a bag was suspended in the mill for David Ritchie's benefit; and those who were carrying home a

melder of meal, seldom failed to add a *gowpen*[1] to the alms-bag of the deformed cripple. In short, David had no occasion for money, save to purchase snuff, his only luxury, in which he indulged himself liberally. When he died, in the beginning of the present century, he was found to have hoarded about twenty pounds, a habit very consistent with his disposition; for wealth is power, and power was what David Ritchie desired to possess, as a compensation for his exclusion from human society.

His sister survived till the publication of the tale to which this brief notice forms the introduction; and the author is sorry to learn that a sort of "local sympathy," and the curiosity then expressed concerning the Author of Waverley and the subjects of his Novels, exposed the poor woman to enquiries which gave her pain. When pressed about her brother's peculiarities, she asked, in her turn, why they would not permit the dead to rest? To others, who pressed for some account of her parents, she answered in the same tone of feeling.

The author saw this poor, and, it may be said, unhappy man, in autumn 1797. Being then, as he has the happiness still to remain, connected by ties of intimate friendship with the family of the venerable Dr. Adam Fergusson, the philosopher and historian, who then resided at the mansion-house of Halyards, in the vale of Manor, about a mile from Ritchie's hermitage, the author was upon a visit at Halyards, which lasted for several days, and was made acquainted with this singular anchorite, whom Dr. Fergusson considered as an extraordinary character, and whom he assisted in various ways, particularly by the occasional loan of books. Though the taste of the philosopher and the poor peasant did not, it may be supposed, always

[1] Handful.

correspond,[1] Dr. Fergusson considered him as a man of a powerful capacity and original ideas, but whose mind was thrown off its just bias by a predominant degree of self-love and self-opinion, galled by the sense of ridicule and contempt, and avenging itself upon society, in idea at least, by a gloomy misanthropy.

David Ritchie, besides the utter obscurity of his life while in existence, had been dead for many years, when it occurred to the author that such a character might be made a powerful agent in fictitious narrative. He, accordingly, sketched that of Elshie of the Mucklestane-Moor. The story was intended to be longer, and the catastrophe more artificially brought out; but a friendly critic, (*a*) [2] to whose opinion I subjected the work in its progress, was of opinion, that the idea of the Solitary was of a kind too revolting, and more likely to disgust than to interest the reader. As I had good right to consider my adviser as an excellent judge of public opinion, I got off my subject by hastening the story to an end, as fast as it was possible; and, by huddling into one volume, a tale which was designed to occupy two, have perhaps produced a narrative as much disproportioned and distorted, as the Black Dwarf, who is its subject.

[1] I remember David was particularly anxious to see a book, which he called, I think, Letters to the Elect Ladies, and which, he said, was the best composition he had ever read; but Dr. Fergusson's library did not supply the volume.

[2] See Editor's Notes at the end of the Volume. Wherever a similar reference occurs, the reader will understand that the same direction applies.

THE BLACK DWARF.

CHAPTER I.

PRELIMINARY.

Hast any philosophy in thee, Shepherd?

As You Like It.

It was a fine April morning (excepting that it had snowed hard the night before, and the ground remained covered with a dazzling mantle of six inches in depth) when two horsemen rode up to the Wallace Inn. The first was a strong, tall, powerful man, in a grey riding-coat, having a hat covered with wax-cloth, a huge silver-mounted horsewhip, boots, and dreadnought overalls. He was mounted on a large strong brown mare, rough in coat, but well in condition, with a saddle of the yeomanry cut, and a double-bitted military bridle. The man who accompanied him was apparently his servant; he rode a shaggy little grey pony, had a blue bonnet on his head, and a large check napkin folded about his neck, wore a pair of long blue worsted hose instead of boots, had his gloveless hands much stained with tar, and observed an air of deference and respect towards his companion, but without any of those indications of precedence and punctilio which are preserved between the gentry and their domestics.

On the contrary, the two travellers entered the court-yard abreast, and the concluding sentence of the conversation which had been carrying on betwixt them was a joint ejaculation, "Lord guide us, an this weather last, what will come o' the lambs!" The hint was sufficient for my Landlord, who, advancing to take the horse of the principal person, and holding him by the reins as he dismounted, while his ostler rendered the same service to the attendant, welcomed the stranger to Gandercleugh, and, in the same breath, enquired, "What news from the south hielands?"

"News?" said the farmer, "bad eneugh news, I think;—an we can carry through the yowes, it will be a' we can do; we maun e'en leave the lambs to the Black Dwarf's care."

"Ay, ay," subjoined the old shepherd, (for such he was,) shaking his head, "he'll be unco busy amang the morts this season."

"The Black Dwarf!" said *my learned friend and patron*,[1] Mr. Jedediah Cleishbotham, "and what sort of a personage may he be?"

"Hout awa' man," answered the farmer, "ye'll hae heard o' Canny Elshie the Black Dwarf, or I am muckle mistaen — A' the warld tells tales about him, but it's but daft nonsense after a' — I dinna believe a word o't frae beginning to end."

"Your father believed it unco stievely, though,"

[1] We have, in this and other instances, printed in italics some few words which the worthy editor, Mr. Jedediah Cleishbotham, seems to have interpolated upon the text of his deceased friend, Mr. Pattieson. We must observe, once for all, that such liberties seem only to have been taken by the learned gentleman where his own character and conduct are concerned; and surely he must be the best judge of the style in which his own character and conduct should be treated of.

said the old man, to whom the scepticism of his master gave obvious displeasure.

"Ay, very true, Bauldie, but that was in the time o' the blackfaces — they believed a hantle queer things in thae days, that naebody heeds since the lang sheep cam in."

"The mair's the pity, the mair's the pity," said the old man. "Your father, and sae I have aften tell'd ye, maister, wad hae been sair vexed to hae seen the auld peel-house wa's pu'd down to make park dykes; and the bonny broomy knowe, where he liked sae weel to sit at e'en, wi' his plaid about him, and look at the kye as they cam down the loaning, ill wad he hae liked to hae seen that braw sunny knowe a' riven out wi' the pleugh in the fashion it is at this day."

"Hout, Bauldie," replied the principal, "tak ye that dram the landlord's offering ye, and never fash your head about the changes o' the warld, sae lang as ye're blithe and bien yoursell."

"Wussing your health, sirs," said the shepherd; and having taken off his glass, and observed the whisky was the right thing, he continued, "It's no for the like o' us to be judging, to be sure; but it was a bonny knowe that broomy knowe, and an unco braw shelter for the lambs in a severe morning like this."

"Ay," said his patron, "but ye ken we maun hae turnips for the lang sheep, billie, and muckle hard wark to get them, baith wi' the pleugh and the howe; and that wad sort ill wi' sitting on the broomy knowe, and cracking about Black Dwarfs, and siccan clavers, as was the gate lang syne, when the short sheep were in the fashion."

"Aweel, aweel, maister," said the attendant, "short sheep had short rents, I'm thinking."

Here my *worthy and learned* patron again interposed, and observed, "that he could never perceive any material difference, in point of longitude, between one sheep and another."

This occasioned a loud hoarse laugh on the part of the farmer, and an astonished stare on the part of the shepherd. "It's the woo', man, — it's the woo', and no the beasts themsells, that makes them be ca'd lang or short. I believe if ye were to measure their backs, the short sheep wad be rather the langer-bodied o' the twa; but it's the woo' that pays the rent in thae days, and it had muckle need."

"Odd, Bauldie says very true, — short sheep did make short rents — my father paid for our steading just threescore punds, and it stands me in three hundred, plack and bawbee. — And that's very true — I hae nae time to be standing here clavering — Landlord, get us our breakfast, and see an' get the yauds fed — I am for doun to Christy Wilson's, to see if him and me can gree about the luckpenny I am to gie him for his year-aulds. We had drank sax mutchkins to the making the bargain at St. Boswell's fair, and some gate we canna gree upon the particulars preceesely, for as muckle time as we took about it — I doubt we draw to a plea — But hear ye, neighbour," addressing my *worthy and learned* patron, "if ye want to hear ony thing about lang or short sheep, I will be back here to my kail against ane o'clock; or, if ye want ony auld-warld stories about the Black Dwarf, and sic-like, if ye'll ware a half mutchkin upon Bauldie there, he'll crack t'ye like a pen-gun. And I'se gie ye a mutchkin mysell, man, if I can settle weel wi' Christy Wilson."

The farmer returned at the hour appointed, and

with him came Christy Wilson, their difference having been fortunately settled without an appeal to the gentlemen of the long robe. My *learned and worthy* patron failed not to attend, both on account of the refreshment promised to the mind and to the body, *although he is known to partake of the latter in a very moderate degree;* and the party, with which my Landlord was associated, continued to sit late in the evening, seasoning their liquor with many choice tales and songs. The last incident which I recollect, was my *learned and worthy* patron falling from his chair, just as he concluded a long lecture upon temperance, by reciting, from the Gentle Shepherd, a couplet, which he *right happily* transferred from the vice of avarice to that of ebriety:

> He that has just eneugh may soundly sleep,
> The owercome only fashes folk to keep.

In the course of the evening the Black Dwarf[1] had not been forgotten, and the old shepherd, Baul-

[1] The Black Dwarf, now almost forgotten, was once held a formidable personage by the dalesmen of the Border, where he got the blame of whatever mischief befell the sheep or cattle. "He was," says Dr. Leyden, who makes considerable use of him in the ballad called the Cowt of Keeldar, "a fairy of the most malignant order — the genuine Northern Duergar." The best and most authentic account of this dangerous and mysterious being occurs in a tale communicated to the author by that eminent antiquary, Richard Surtees, Esq. of Mainsforth, author of the History of the Bishopric of Durham.

According to this well-attested legend, (*b*) two young Northumbrians were out on a shooting party, and had plunged deep among the mountainous moorlands which border on Cumberland. They stopped for refreshment in a little secluded dell by the side of a rivulet. There, after they had partaken of such food as they brought with them, one of the party fell asleep; the other, unwilling to disturb his friend's repose, stole silently out of the dell with the purpose of looking around him, when he was as-

die, told so many stories of him, that they excited a good deal of interest. It also appeared, though not till the third punch-bowl was emptied, that

tonished to find himself close to a being who seemed not to belong to this world, as he was the most hideous dwarf that the sun had ever shone on. His head was of full human size, forming a frightful contrast with his height, which was considerably under four feet. It was thatched with no other covering than long matted red hair, like that of the felt of a badger in consistence, and in colour a reddish brown, like the hue of the heather-blossom. His limbs seemed of great strength; nor was he otherwise deformed than from their undue proportion in thickness to his diminutive height. The terrified sportsman stood gazing on this horrible apparition, until, with an angry countenance, the being demanded by what right he intruded himself on those hills, and destroyed their harmless inhabitants. The perplexed stranger endeavoured to propitiate the incensed dwarf, by offering to surrender his game, as he would to an earthly Lord of the Manor. The proposal only redoubled the offence already taken by the dwarf, who alleged that he was the lord of those mountains, and the protector of the wild creatures who found a retreat in their solitary recesses; and that all spoils derived from their death, or misery, were abhorrent to him. The hunter humbled himself before the angry goblin, and by protestations of his ignorance, and of his resolution to abstain from such intrusion in future, at last succeeded in pacifying him. The gnome now became more communicative, and spoke of himself as belonging to a species of beings something between the angelic race and humanity. He added, moreover, which could hardly have been anticipated, that he had hopes of sharing in the redemption of the race of Adam. He pressed the sportsman to visit his dwelling, which he said was hard by, and plighted his faith for his safe return. But at this moment, the shout of the sportsman's companion was heard calling for his friend, and the dwarf, as if unwilling that more than one person should be cognisant of his presence, disappeared as the young man emerged from the dell to join his comrade.

It was the universal opinion of those most experienced in such matters, that if the shooter had accompanied the spirit, he would, notwithstanding the dwarf's fair pretences, have been either torn to pieces, or immured for years in the recesses of some fairy hill.

Such is the last and most authentic account of the apparition of the Black Dwarf.

much of the farmer's scepticism on the subject was affected, as evincing a liberality of thinking, and a freedom from ancient prejudices, becoming a man who paid three hundred pounds a-year of rent, while, in fact, he had a lurking belief in the traditions of his forefathers. After my usual manner, I made farther enquiries of other persons connected with the wild and pastoral district in which the scene of the following narrative is placed, and I was fortunate enough to recover many links of the story, not generally known, and which account, at least in some degree, for the circumstances of exaggerated marvel with which superstition has attired it in the more vulgar traditions.

CHAPTER II.

Will none but Hearne the Hunter serve your turn?
Merry Wives of Windsor.

In one of the most remote districts of the south of Scotland, where an ideal line, drawn along the tops of lofty and bleak mountains, separates that land from her sister kingdom, a young man, called Halbert, or Hobbie Elliot, a substantial farmer, who boasted his descent from old Martin Elliot of the Preakin-tower, noted in Border story and song, was on his return from deer-stalking. The deer, once so numerous among these solitary wastes, were now reduced to a very few herds, which, sheltering themselves in the most remote and inaccessible recesses, rendered the task of pursuing them equally toilsome and precarious. There were, however, found many youth of the country ardently attached to this sport, with all its dangers and fatigues. The sword had been sheathed upon the Borders for more than a hundred years, by the peaceful union of the crowns in the reign of James the First of Great Britain. Still the country retained traces of what it had been in former days; the inhabitants, their more peaceful avocations having been repeatedly interrupted by the civil wars of the preceding century, were scarce yet broken in to the habits of regular industry, sheep-farming had not been introduced upon any considerable scale, and the feeding of black cattle was the chief purpose to which the

hills and valleys were applied. Near to the farmer's house, the tenant usually contrived to raise such a crop of oats or barley, as afforded meal for his family; and the whole of this slovenly and imperfect mode of cultivation left much time upon his own hands, and those of his domestics. This was usually employed by the young men in hunting and fishing; and the spirit of adventure, which formerly led to raids and forays in the same districts, was still to be discovered in the eagerness with which they pursued those rural sports.

The more high-spirited among the youth were, about the time that our narrative begins, expecting, rather with hope than apprehension, an opportunity of emulating their fathers in their military achievements, the recital of which formed the chief part of their amusement within doors. The passing of the Scottish act of security had given the alarm to England, as it seemed to point at a separation of the two British kingdoms, after the decease of Queen Anne, the reigning sovereign. Godolphin, then at the head of the English administration, foresaw that there was no other mode of avoiding the probable extremity of a civil war, but by carrying through an incorporating union. How that treaty was managed, and how little it seemed for some time to promise the beneficial results which have since taken place to such extent, may be learned from the history of the period. It is enough for our purpose to say, that all Scotland was indignant at the terms on which their legislature had surrendered their national independence. The general resentment led to the strangest leagues and to the wildest plans. The Cameronians were about to take arms for the restoration of the house of Stewart, whom they

regarded, with justice, as their oppressors; and the intrigues of the period presented the strange picture of papists, prelatists, and presbyterians, caballing among themselves against the English government, out of a common feeling that their country had been treated with injustice. The fermentation was universal; and, as the population of Scotland had been generally trained to arms, under the act of security, they were not indifferently prepared for war, and waited but the declaration of some of the nobility to break out into open hostility. It was at this period of public confusion that our story opens.

The cleugh, or wild ravine, into which Hobbie Elliot had followed the game, was already far behind him, and he was considerably advanced on his return homeward, when the night began to close upon him. This would have been a circumstance of great indifference to the experienced sportsman, who could have walked blindfold over every inch of his native heaths, had it not happened near a spot, which, according to the traditions of the country, was in extremely bad fame, as haunted by supernatural appearances. To tales of this kind Hobbie had, from his childhood, lent an attentive ear; and as no part of the country afforded such a variety of legends, so no man was more deeply read in their fearful lore than Hobbie of the Heugh-foot; for so our gallant was called, to distinguish him from a round dozen of Elliots who bore the same Christian name. It cost him no efforts, therefore, to call to memory the terrific incidents connected with the extensive waste upon which he was now entering. In fact, they presented themselves with a readiness which he felt to be somewhat dismaying.

This dreary common was called Mucklestane-Moor, from a huge column of unhewn granite, which raised its massy head on a knoll near the centre of the heath, perhaps to tell of the mighty dead who slept beneath, or to preserve the memory of some bloody skirmish. The real cause of its existence had, however, passed away; and tradition, which is as frequently an inventor of fiction as a preserver of truth, had supplied its place with a supplementary legend of her own, which now came full upon Hobbie's memory. The ground about the pillar was strewed, or rather encumbered, with many large fragments of stone of the same consistence with the column, which, from their appearance as they lay scattered on the waste, were popularly called the Grey Geese of Mucklestane-Moor. The legend accounted for this name and appearance by the catastrophe of a noted and most formidable witch who frequented these hills in former days, causing the ewes to *keb*, and the kine to cast their calves, and performing all the feats of mischief ascribed to these evil beings. On this moor she used to hold her revels with her sister hags; and rings were still pointed out on which no grass nor heath ever grew, the turf being, as it were, calcined by the scorching hoofs of their diabolical partners.

Once upon a time this old hag is said to have crossed the moor, driving before her a flock of geese, which she proposed to sell to advantage at a neighbouring fair; — for it is well known that the fiend, however liberal in imparting his powers of doing mischief, ungenerously leaves his allies under the necessity of performing the meanest rustic labours for subsistence. The day was far advanced, and her chance of obtaining a good price depended on

her being first at the market. But the geese, which had hitherto preceded her in a pretty orderly manner, when they came to this wide common, interspersed with marshes and pools of water, scattered in every direction, to plunge into the element in which they delighted. Incensed at the obstinacy with which they defied all her efforts to collect them, and not remembering the precise terms of the contract by which the fiend was bound to obey her commands for a certain space, the sorceress exclaimed, "Deevil, that neither I nor they ever stir from this spot more!" The words were hardly uttered, when, by a metamorphosis as sudden as any in Ovid, the hag and her refractory flock were converted into stone, the angel whom she served, being a strict formalist, grasping eagerly at an opportunity of completing the ruin of her body and soul by a literal obedience to her orders. It is said, that when she perceived and felt the transformation which was about to take place, she exclaimed to the treacherous fiend, "Ah, thou false thief! lang hast thou promised me a grey gown, (*c*) and now I am getting ane that will last for ever." The dimensions of the pillar, and of the stones, were often appealed to, as a proof of the superior stature and size of old women and geese in the days of other years, by those praisers of the past who held the comfortable opinion of the gradual degeneracy of mankind.

All particulars of this legend Hobbie called to mind as he passed along the moor. He also remembered, that, since the catastrophe had taken place, the scene of it had been avoided, at least after night-fall, by all human beings, as being the ordinary resort of kelpies, spunkies, and other demons, once the companions of the witch's diabolical

revels, and now continuing to rendezvous upon the same spot, as if still in attendance on their transformed mistress. Hobbie's natural hardihood, however, manfully combated with these intrusive sensations of awe. He summoned to his side the brace of large greyhounds, who were the companions of his sports, and who were wont, in his own phrase, to fear neither dog nor devil; he looked at the priming of his piece, and, like the clown in Hallowe'en, whistled up the warlike ditty of Jock of the Side, as a general causes his drums be beat to inspirit the doubtful courage of his soldiers.

In this state of mind, he was very glad to hear a friendly voice shout in his rear, and propose to him a partner on the road. He slackened his pace, and was quickly joined by a youth well known to him, a gentleman of some fortune in that remote country, and who had been abroad on the same errand with himself. Young Earnscliff, "of that ilk," had lately come of age, and succeeded to a moderate fortune, a good deal dilapidated, from the share his family had taken in the disturbances of the period. They were much and generally respected in the country; a reputation which this young gentleman seemed likely to sustain, as he was well educated, and of excellent dispositions.

"Now, Earnscliff," exclaimed Hobbie, "I am glad to meet your honour ony gate, and company's blithe on a bare moor like this — it's an unco bogilly bit — Where hae ye been sporting?"

"Up the Carla Cleugh, Hobbie," answered Earnscliff, returning his greeting. "But will our dogs keep the peace, think you?"

"Deil a fear o' mine," said Hobbie, "they hae scarce a leg to stand on. — Odd! the deer's fled the

country, I think! I have been as far as Inger-fell-foot, and deil a horn has Hobbie seen, excepting three red-wud raes, that never let me within shot of them, though I gaed a mile round to get up the wind to them, an' a'. Deil o' me wad care muckle, only I wanted some venison to our auld gude-dame. The carline, she sits in the neuk yonder, upbye, and cracks about the grand shooters and hunters lang syne — Odd, I think they hae killed a' the deer in the country, for my part."

"Well, Hobbie, I have shot a fat buck, and sent him to Earnscliff this morning — you shall have half of him for your grandmother."

"Mony thanks to ye, Mr. Patrick, ye're kend to a' the country for a kind heart. It will do the auld wife's heart gude — mair by token, when she kens it comes frae you — and maist of a' gin ye'll come up and take your share, for I reckon ye are lonesome now in the auld tower, and a' your folk at that weary Edinburgh. I wonder what they can find to do amang a wheen ranks o' stane houses wi' slate on the tap o' them, that might live on their ain bonny green hills."

"My education and my sisters' has kept my mother much in Edinburgh for several years," said Earnscliff, "but I promise you I propose to make up for lost time."

"And ye'll rig out the auld tower a bit," said Hobbie, "and live hearty and neighbour-like wi' the auld family friends, as the Laird o' Earnscliff should? I can tell ye, my mother — my grandmother I mean — but, since we lost our ain mother, we ca' her sometimes the tane, and sometimes the tother — but, ony gate, she conceits hersell no that distant connected wi' you."

"Very true, Hobbie, and I will come to the Heugh-foot to dinner to-morrow with all my heart."

"Weel, that's kindly said! We are auld neighbours, an we were nae kin — and my gude-dame's fain to see you — she clavers about your father that was killed lang syne."

"Hush, hush, Hobbie — not a word about that — it's a story better forgotten."

"I dinna ken — if it had chanced amang our folk, we wad hae keepit it in mind mony a day till we got some mends for't — but ye ken your ain ways best, you lairds — I have heard say that Ellieslaw's friend stickit your sire after the laird himsell had mastered his sword."

"Fie, fie, Hobbie; it was a foolish brawl, occasioned by wine and politics — many swords were drawn — it is impossible to say who struck the blow."

"At ony rate, auld Ellieslaw was aiding and abetting; and I am sure if ye were sae disposed as to take amends on him, naebody could say it was wrang, for your father's blood is beneath his nails — and besides there's naebody else left that was concerned to take amends upon, and he's a prelatist and a jacobite into the bargain — I can tell ye the country folk look for something atween ye."

"O for shame, Hobbie!" replied the young Laird; "you, that profess religion, to stir your friend up to break the law, and take vengeance at his own hand, and in such a bogilly bit too, where we know not what beings may be listening to us!"

"Hush, hush!" said Hobbie, drawing nearer to his companion, "I was nae thinking o' the like o' them — But I can guess a wee bit what keeps your hand up, Mr. Patrick; we a' ken it's no lack o' cour-

age, but the twa grey een of a bonny lass, Miss Isabel Vere, that keeps you sae sober."

"I assure you, Hobbie," said his companion, rather angrily, "I assure you you are mistaken; and it is extremely wrong of you, either to think of, or to utter, such an idea. I have no idea of permitting freedoms to be carried so far as to connect my name with that of any young lady."

"Why, there now — there now!" retorted Elliot; "did I not say it was nae want o' spunk that made ye sae mim? — Weel, weel, I meant nae offence; but there's just ae thing ye may notice frae a friend. The auld Laird of Ellieslaw has the auld riding blood far hetter at his heart than ye hae — troth, he kens naething about thae newfangled notions o' peace and quietness — he's a' for the auld warld doings o' lifting and laying on, and he has a wheen stout lads at his back too, and keeps them weel up in heart, and as fu' o' mischief as young colts. Where he gets the gear to do't nane can say; he lives high, and far abune his rents here; however, he pays his way — Sae, if there's ony outbreak in the country, he's likely to break out wi' the first — and weel does he mind the auld quarrels between ye. I'm surmising he'll be for a touch at the auld tower at Earnscliff."

"Well, Hobbie," answered the young gentleman, "if he should be so ill advised, I shall try to make the old tower good against him, as it has been made good by my betters against his betters many a day ago."

"Very right — very right — that's speaking like a man now," said the stout yeoman; "and, if sae should be that this be sae, if ye'll just gar your servant jow out the great bell in the tower, there's me,

and my twa brothers, and little Davie of the Stenhouse, will be wi' you, wi' a' the power we can make, in the snapping of a flint."

"Many thanks, Hobbie," answered Earnscliff; "but I hope we shall have no war of so unnatural and unchristian a kind in our time."

"Hout, sir, hout," replied Elliot; "it wad be but a wee bit neighbour war, and Heaven and earth would make allowances for it in this uncultivated place — it's just the nature o' the folk and the land — we canna live quiet like Loudon folk — we haena sae muckle to do. It's impossible."

"Well, Hobbie," said the Laird, "for one who believes so deeply as you do in supernatural appearances, I must own you take Heaven in your own hand rather audaciously, considering where we are walking."

"What needs I care for the Mucklestane-Moor ony mair than ye do yoursell, Earnscliff?" said Hobbie, something offended; "to be sure, they do say there's a sort o' worricows and lang-nebbit things about the land, but what need I care for them? I hae a good conscience, and little to answer for, unless it be about a rant amang the lasses, or a splore at a fair, and that's no muckle to speak of. Though I say it mysell, I am as quiet a lad and as peaceable" ——

"And Dick Turnbull's head that you broke, and Willie of Winton whom you shot at?" said his travelling companion.

"Hout, Earnscliff, ye keep a record of a' men's misdoings — Dick's head's healed again, and we're to fight out the quarrel at Jeddart, on the Roodday, so that's like a thing settled in a peaceable way; and then I am friends wi' Willie again, puir

chield — it was but twa or three hail draps after a'. I wad let ony body do the like o't to me for a pint o' brandy. But Willie's lowland bred, poor fallow, and soon frighted for himsell — And, for the worricows, were we to meet ane on this very bit"——

"As is not unlikely," said young Earnscliff, "for there stands your old witch, Hobbie."

"I say," continued Elliot, as if indignant at this hint — "I say, if the auld carline hersell was to get up out o' the grund just before us here, I would think nae mair — But, gude preserve us, Earnscliff, what can yon be!"

CHAPTER III.

> Brown Dwarf, that o'er the moorland strays,
> Thy name to Keeldar tell!
> "The Brown Man of the Moor, that stays
> Beneath the heather-bell."
>
> JOHN LEYDEN.

THE object which alarmed the young farmer in the middle of his valorous protestations, startled for a moment even his less prejudiced companion. The moon, which had arisen during their conversation, was, in the phrase of that country, wading or struggling with clouds, and shed only a doubtful and occasional light. By one of her beams, which streamed upon the great granite column to which they now approached, they discovered a form, apparently human, but of a size much less than ordinary, which moved slowly among the large grey stones, not like a person intending to journey onward, but with the slow, irregular, flitting movement of a being who hovers around some spot of melancholy recollection, uttering also, from time to time, a sort of indistinct muttering sound. This so much resembled his idea of the motions of an apparition, that Hobbie Elliot, making a dead pause, while his hair erected itself upon his scalp, whispered to his companion, "It's Auld Ailie hersell! Shall I gie her a shot, in the name of God?"

"For Heaven's sake, no," said his companion, holding down the weapon which he was about to

raise to the aim — "for Heaven's sake, no; it's some poor distracted creature."

"Ye're distracted yoursell, for thinking of going so near to her," said Elliot, holding his companion in his turn, as he prepared to advance. "We'll aye hae time to pit ower a bit prayer (an I could but mind ane) afore she comes this length — God! she's in nae hurry," continued he, growing bolder from his companion's confidence, and the little notice the apparition seemed to take of them. "She hirples like a hen on a het girdle. I redd ye, Earnscliff," (this he added in a gentle whisper,) "let us take a cast about, as if to draw the wind on a buck — the bog is no abune knee-deep, and better a saft road as bad company."[1]

Earnscliff, however, in spite of his companion's resistance and remonstrances, continued to advance on the path they had originally pursued, and soon confronted the object of their investigation.

The height of the figure, which appeared even to decrease as they approached it, seemed to be under four feet, and its form, as far as the imperfect light afforded them the means of discerning, was very nearly as broad as long, or rather of a spherical shape, which could only be occasioned by some strange personal deformity. The young sportsman hailed this extraordinary appearance twice, without receiving any answer, or attending to the pinches by which his companion endeavoured to intimate that their best course was to walk on, without giving farther disturbance to a being of such singular and preternatural exterior. To the third repeated de-

[1] The Scots use the epithet soft, *in malam partem*, in two cases at least. A *soft* road, is a road through quagmire and bogs; and *soft* weather, signifies that which is very rainy.

mand of "Who are you? What do you here at this hour of night?" — a voice replied, whose shrill, uncouth, and dissonant tones made Elliot step two paces back, and startled even his companion, "Pass on your way, and ask nought at them that ask nought at you."

"What do you do here so far from shelter? Are you benighted on your journey? Will you follow us home, ('God forbid!' ejaculated Hobbie Elliot, involuntarily,) and I will give you a lodging?"

"I would sooner lodge by mysell in the deepest of the Tarras-flow," again whispered Hobbie.

"Pass on your way," rejoined the figure, the harsh tones of his voice still more exalted by passion. "I want not your guidance — I want not your lodging — it is five years since my head was under a human roof, and I trust it was for the last time."

"He is mad," said Earnscliff.

"He has a look of auld Humphrey Ettercap, the tinkler, that perished in this very moss about five years syne," answered his superstitious companion; "but Humphrey wasna that awfu' big in the bouk."

"Pass on your way," reiterated the object of their curiosity, "the breath of your human bodies poisons the air around me — the sound of your human voices goes through my ears like sharp bodkins."

"Lord safe us!" whispered Hobbie, "that the dead should bear sic fearfu' ill-will to the living! — his saul maun be in a puir way, I'm jealous."

"Come, my friend," said Earnscliff, "you seem to suffer under some strong affliction; common humanity will not allow us to leave you here."

"Common humanity!" exclaimed the being, with a scornful laugh that sounded like a shriek, "where got ye that catch-word — that noose for woodcocks

— that common disguise for man-traps — that bait which the wretched idiot who swallows, will soon find covers a hook with barbs ten times sharper than those you lay for the animals which you murder for your luxury!"

"I tell you, my friend," again replied Earnscliff, "you are incapable of judging of your own situation — you will perish in this wilderness, and we must, in compassion, force you along with us."

"I'll hae neither hand nor foot in't," said Hobbie; "let the ghaist take his ain way, for God's sake!"

"My blood be on my own head, if I perish here," said the figure; and, observing Earnscliff meditating to lay hold on him, he added, "And your blood be upon yours, if you touch but the skirt of my garments, to infect me with the taint of mortality!"

The moon shone more brightly as he spoke thus, and Earnscliff observed that he held out his right hand armed with some weapon of offence, which glittered in the cold ray like the blade of a long knife, or the barrel of a pistol. It would have been madness to persevere in his attempt upon a being thus armed, and holding such desperate language, especially as it was plain he would have little aid from his companion, who had fairly left him to settle matters with the apparition as he could, and had proceeded a few paces on his way homeward. Earnscliff, therefore, turned and followed Hobbie, after looking back towards the supposed maniac, who, as if raised to frenzy by the interview, roamed wildly around the great stone, exhausting his voice in shrieks and imprecations, that thrilled wildly along the waste heath.

The two sportsmen moved on some time in silence, until they were out of hearing of these uncouth

sounds, which was not ere they had gained a considerable distance from the pillar that gave name to the moor. Each made his private comments on the scene they had witnessed, until Hobbie Elliot suddenly exclaimed, "Weel, I'll uphaud that yon ghaist, if it be a ghaist, has baith done and suffered muckle evil in the flesh, that gars him rampauge in that way after he is dead and gane."

"It seems to me the very madness of misanthropy," said Earnscliff, following his own current of thought.

"And ye didna think it was a spiritual creature, then?" asked Hobbie at his companion.

"Who, I? — No, surely."

"Weel, I am partly of the mind mysell that it may be a live thing — and yet I dinna ken, I wadna wish to see ony thing look liker a bogle."

"At any rate," said Earnscliff, "I will ride over to-morrow, and see what has become of the unhappy being."

"In fair daylight?" queried the yeoman; "then, grace o' God, I'se be wi' ye. But here we are nearer to Heugh-foot than to your house by twa mile, — hadna ye better e'en gae hame wi' me, and we'll send the callant on the powny to tell them that you are wi' us, though I believe there's naebody at hame to wait for you but the servants and the cat."

"Have with you then, friend Hobbie," said the young hunter; "and as I would not willingly have either the servants be anxious, or puss forfeit her supper, in my absence, I'll be obliged to you to send the boy as you propose."

"Aweel, that *is* kind, I must say. And ye'll gae hame to Heugh-foot? They'll be right blithe to see you, that will they."

This affair settled, they walked briskly on a little farther, when, coming to the ridge of a pretty steep hill, Hobbie Elliot exclaimed, "Now, Earnscliff, I am aye glad when I come to this very bit — Ye see the light below, that's in the ha' window, where grannie, the gash auld carline, is sitting birling at her wheel — and ye see yon other light that's gaun whiddin' back and forrit through amang the windows? that's my cousin, Grace Armstrong, — she's twice as clever about the house as my sisters, and sae they say themsells, for they're good-natured lasses as ever trode on heather; but they confess themsells, and sae does grannie, that she has far maist action, and is the best goer about the toun, now that grannie is off the foot hersell. — My brothers, ane o' them's away to wait upon the chamberlain, and ane's at Moss-phadraig, that's our led farm — he can see after the stock just as weel as I can do."

"You are lucky, my good friend, in having so many valuable relations."

"Troth am I — Grace make me thankful, I'se never deny it. — But will ye tell me now, Earnscliff, you that have been at college, and the high-school of Edinburgh, and got a' sort o' lair where it was to be best gotten — will ye tell me — no that it's ony concern of mine in particular, — but I heard the priest of St. John's, and our minister, bargaining about it at the Winter fair, and troth they baith spak very weel — Now, the priest says it's unlawful to marry ane's cousin; but I cannot say I thought he brought out the Gospel authorities half sae weel as our minister — our minister is thought the best divine and the best preacher atween this and Edinburgh — Dinna ye think he was likely to be right?"

"Certainly marriage, by all protestant Christians, is held to be as free as God made it by the Levitical law; so, Hobbie, there can be no bar, legal or religious, betwixt you and Miss Armstrong."

"Hout awa' wi' your joking, Earnscliff," replied his companion,—"ye are angry aneugh yoursell if ane touches you a bit, man, on the sooth side of the jest — No that I was asking the question about Grace, for ye maun ken she's no my cousin-germain out and out, but the daughter of my uncle's wife by her first marriage, so she's nae kith nor kin to me — only a connexion like. But now we're at the Sheeling-hill — I'll fire off my gun, to let them ken I'm coming, that's aye my way; and if I hae a deer I gie them twa shots, ane for the deer and ane for mysell."

He fired off his piece accordingly, and the number of lights were seen to traverse the house, and even to gleam before it. Hobbie Elliot pointed out one of these to Earnscliff, which seemed to glide from the house towards some of the out-houses — "That's Grace hersell," said Hobbie. "She'll no meet me at the door, I'se warrant her — but she'll be awa', for a' that, to see if my hounds' supper be ready, poor beasts."

"Love me, love my dog," answered Earnscliff. "Ah, Hobbie, you are a lucky young fellow!"

This observation was uttered with something like a sigh, which apparently did not escape the ear of his companion.

"Hout, other folk may be as lucky as I am — O how I have seen Miss Isabel Vere's head turn after somebody when they passed ane another at the Carlisle races! Wha kens but things may come round in this world?"

Earnscliff muttered something like an answer; but whether in assent of the proposition, or rebuking the application of it, could not easily be discovered; and it seems probable that the speaker himself was willing his meaning should rest in doubt and obscurity. They had now descended the broad loaning, which, winding round the foot of the steep bank, or heugh, brought them in front of the thatched, but comfortable, farm-house, which was the dwelling of Hobbie Elliot and his family.

The doorway was thronged with joyful faces; but the appearance of a stranger blunted many a gibe which had been prepared on Hobbie's lack of success in the deer-stalking. There was a little bustle among three handsome young women, each endeavouring to devolve upon another the task of ushering the stranger into the apartment, while probably all were anxious to escape for the purpose of making some little personal arrangements, before presenting themselves to a young gentleman in a dishabille only intended for their brother.

Hobbie, in the meanwhile, bestowing some hearty and general abuse upon them all, (for Grace was not of the party,) snatched the candle from the hand of one of the rustic coquettes, as she stood playing pretty with it in her hand, and ushered his guest into the family parlour, or rather hall; for the place having been a house of defence in former times, the sitting apartment was a vaulted and paved room, damp and dismal enough compared with the lodgings of the yeomanry of our days, but which, when well lighted up with a large sparkling fire of turf and bog-wood, seemed to Earnscliff a most comfortable exchange for the darkness and bleak blast of the hill. Kindly and repeat-

edly was he welcomed by the venerable old dame, the mistress of the family, who, dressed in her coif and pinners, her close and decent gown of home-spun wool, but with a large gold necklace and ear-rings, looked, what she really was, the lady as well as the farmer's wife, while, seated in her chair of wicker, by the corner of the great chimney, she directed the evening occupations of the young women, and of two or three stout serving wenches, who sate plying their distaffs behind the backs of their young mistresses.

As soon as Earnscliff had been duly welcomed, and hasty orders issued for some addition to the evening meal, his grand-dame and sisters opened their battery upon Hobbie Elliot for his lack of success against the deer.

"Jenny needna have kept up her kitchen-fire for a' that Hobbie has brought hame," said one sister.

"Troth no, lass," said another; "the gathering peat,[1] if it was weel blawn, wad dress a' our Hobbie's venison."

"Ay, or the low of the candle, if the wind wad let it bide steady," said a third; "if I were him, I would bring hame a black craw, rather than come back three times without a buck's horn to blaw on."

Hobbie turned from the one to the other, regarding them alternately with a frown on his brow, the augury of which was confuted by the good-humoured laugh on the lower part of his countenance. He then strove to propitiate them, by mentioning the intended present of his companion.

[1] The gathering peat is the piece of turf left to treasure up the secret seeds of fire, without any generous consumption of fuel; in a word, to keep the fire alive.

"In my young days," said the old lady, "a man wad hae been ashamed to come back frae the hill without a buck hanging on each side o' his horse, like a cadger carrying calves."

"I wish they had left some for us then, grannie," retorted Hobbie; "they've cleared the country o' them, thae auld friends o' yours, I'm thinking."

"Ye see other folk can find game, though you cannot, Hobbie," said the eldest sister, glancing a look at young Earnscliff.

"Weel, weel, woman, hasna every dog his day, begging Earnscliff's pardon for the auld saying — Mayna I hae his luck, and he mine, another time? — It's a braw thing for a man to be out a' day, and frighted — na, I winna say that neither — but mistrysted wi' bogles in the hame-coming, an' then to hae to flyte wi' a wheen women that hae been doing naething a' the live-lang day, but whirling a bit stick, wi' a thread trailing at it, or boring at a clout."

"Frighted wi' bogles!" exclaimed the females, one and all, — for great was the regard then paid, and perhaps still paid, in these glens, to all such fantasies.

"I did not say frighted, now — I only said misset wi' the thing — And there was but ae bogle, neither — Earnscliff, ye saw it as weel as I did?"

And he proceeded, without very much exaggeration, to detail, in his own way, the meeting they had with the mysterious being at Mucklestane-Moor, concluding, "he could not conjecture what on earth it could be, unless it was either the Enemy himsell, or some of the auld Peghts (*d*) that held the country lang syne."

"Auld Peght!" exclaimed the grand-dame;

" na, na — bless thee frae scatche, my bairn, it's been nae Peght that — it's been the Brown Man of the Moors ! O weary fa' thae evil days ! — what can evil beings be coming for to distract a poor country, now it's peacefully settled, and living in love and law ? — O weary on him ! he ne'er brought gude to these lands or the indwellers. My father aften tauld me he was seen in the year o' the bloody fight at Marston-Moor, and then again in Montrose's troubles, and again before the rout o' Dunbar, and, in my ain time, he was seen about the time o' Bothwell-Brigg, and they said the second-sighted Laird of Benarbuck had a communing wi' him some time afore Argyle's landing, but that I cannot speak to sae preceesely — it was far in the west. — O, bairns, he's never permitted but in an ill time, sae mind ilka ane o' ye to draw to Him that can help in the day of trouble."

Earnscliff now interposed, and expressed his firm conviction that the person they had seen was some poor maniac, and had no commission from the invisible world to announce either war or evil. But his opinion found a very cold audience, and all joined to deprecate his purpose of returning to the spot the next day.

" O, my bonny bairn," said the old dame, (for, in the kindness of her heart, she extended her parental style to all in whom she was interested) — " You should beware mair than other folk — there's been a heavy breach made in your house wi' your father's bloodshed, and wi' law-pleas, and losses sinsyne ; — and you are the flower of the flock, and the lad that will build up the auld bigging again (if it be His will) to be an honour to the country, and a safeguard to those that dwell in it — you, before

others, are called upon to put yourself in no rash adventures — for yours was aye ower venturesome a race, and muckle harm they have got by it."

"But I am sure, my good friend, you would not have me be afraid of going to an open moor in broad daylight?"

"I dinna ken," said the good old dame; "I wad never bid son or friend o' mine haud their hand back in a gude cause, whether it were a friend's or their ain — that should be by nae bidding of mine, or of ony body that's come of a gentle kindred — But it winna gang out of a grey head like mine, that to gang to seek for evil that's no fashing wi' you, is clean against law and Scripture."

Earnscliff resigned an argument which he saw no prospect of maintaining with good effect, and the entrance of supper broke off the conversation. Miss Grace had by this time made her appearance, and Hobbie, not without a conscious glance at Earnscliff, placed himself by her side. Mirth and lively conversation, in which the old lady of the house took the good-humoured share which so well becomes old age, restored to the cheeks of the damsels the roses which their brother's tale of the apparition had chased away, and they danced and sung for an hour after supper as if there were no such things as goblins in the world.

CHAPTER IV.

> I am Misanthropos, and hate mankind;
> For thy part, I do wish thou wert a dog,
> That I might love thee something.
>
> *Timon of Athens.*

On the following morning, after breakfast, Earnscliff took leave of his hospitable friends, promising to return in time to partake of the venison, which had arrived from his house. Hobbie, who apparently took leave of him at the door of his habitation, slunk out, however, and joined him at the top of the hill.

"Ye'll be gaun yonder, Mr. Patrick; feind o' me will mistryst you for a' my mother says. I thought it best to slip out quietly though, in case she should mislippen something of what we're gaun to do — we maunna vex her at nae rate — it was amaist the last word my father said to me on his deathbed."

"By no means, Hobbie," said Earnscliff; "she well merits all your attention."

"Troth, for that matter, she would be as sair vexed amaist for you as for me. But d'ye really think there's nae presumption in venturing back yonder? — We hae nae special commission, ye ken."

"If I thought as you do, Hobbie," said the young gentleman, "I would not perhaps enquire farther into this business; but as I am of opinion that pre-

ternatural visitations are either ceased altogether, or become very rare in our days, I am unwilling to leave a matter uninvestigated which may concern the life of a poor distracted being."

"Aweel, aweel, if ye really think that," answered Hobbie doubtfully — "And it's for certain the very fairies — I mean the very good neighbours themsells (for they say folk suldna ca' them fairies) that used to be seen on every green knowe at e'en, are no half sae often visible in our days. I canna depone to having ever seen ane mysell, but I ance heard ane whistle ahint me in the moss, as like a whaup[1] as ae thing could be like anither. And mony ane my father saw when he used to come hame frae the fairs at e'en, wi' a drap drink in his head, honest man."

Earnscliff was somewhat entertained with the gradual declension of superstition from one generation to another which was inferred in this last observation; and they continued to reason on such subjects, until they came in sight of the upright stone which gave name to the moor.

"As I shall answer," says Hobbie, "yonder's the creature creeping about yet! — But it's day-light, and you have your gun, and I brought out my bit whinger — I think we may venture on him."

"By all manner of means," said Earnscliff; "but, in the name of wonder, what can he be doing there?"

"Biggin a dry-stane dyke, I think, wi' the grey geese, as they ca' thae great loose stanes — Odd, that passes a' thing I e'er heard tell of!"

As they approached nearer, Earnscliff could not help agreeing with his companion. The figure they

[1] Curlew.

had seen the night before seemed slowly and toilsomely labouring to pile the large stones one upon another, as if to form a small enclosure. Materials lay around him in great plenty, but the labour of carrying on the work was immense, from the size of most of the stones; and it seemed astonishing that he should have succeeded in moving several which he had already arranged for the foundation of his edifice. He was struggling to move a fragment of great size when the two young men came up, and was so intent upon executing his purpose, that he did not perceive them till they were close upon him. In straining and heaving at the stone, in order to place it according to his wish, he displayed a degree of strength which seemed utterly inconsistent with his size and apparent deformity. Indeed, to judge from the difficulties he had already surmounted, he must have been of Herculean powers; for some of the stones he had succeeded in raising apparently required two men's strength to have moved them. Hobbie's suspicions began to revive, on seeing the preternatural strength he exerted.

"I am amaist persuaded it's the ghaist of a stanemason — see siccan band-stanes as he's laid! — An it be a man, after a', I wonder what he wad take by the rood to build a march dyke. There's ane sair wanted between Cringlehope and the Shaws. — Honest man," (raising his voice,) "ye make good firm wark there?"

The being whom he addressed raised his eyes with a ghastly stare, and, getting up from his stooping posture, stood before them in all his native and hideous deformity. His head was of uncommon size, covered with a fell of shaggy hair, partly grizzled

with age; his eyebrows, shaggy and prominent, overhung a pair of small, dark, piercing eyes, set far back in their sockets, that rolled with a portentous wildness, indicative of a partial insanity. The rest of his features were of the coarse, rough-hewn stamp, with which a painter would equip a giant in romance; to which was added the wild, irregular, and peculiar expression, so often seen in the countenances of those whose persons are deformed. His body, thick and square, like that of a man of middle size, was mounted upon two large feet; but nature seemed to have forgotten the legs and the thighs, or they were so very short as to be hidden by the dress which he wore. His arms were long and brawny, furnished with two muscular hands, and, where uncovered in the eagerness of his labour, were shagged with coarse black hair. It seemed as if nature had originally intended the separate parts of his body to be the members of a giant, but had afterwards capriciously assigned them to the person of a dwarf, so ill did the length of his arms and the iron strength of his frame correspond with the shortness of his stature. His clothing was a sort of coarse brown tunic, like a monk's frock, girt round him with a belt of seal-skin. On his head he had a cap made of badger's skin, or some other rough fur, which added considerably to the grotesque effect of his whole appearance, and overshadowed features, whose habitual expression seemed that of sullen malignant misanthropy.

This remarkable dwarf gazed on the two youths in silence, with a dogged and irritated look, until Earnscliff, willing to soothe him into better temper, observed, "You are hard tasked, my friend; allow us to assist you."

Elliot and he accordingly placed the stone, by their joint efforts, upon the rising wall. The Dwarf watched them with the eye of a taskmaster, and testified, by peevish gestures, his impatience at the time which they took in adjusting the stone. He pointed to another — they raised it also — to a third, to a fourth — they continued to humour him, though with some trouble, for he assigned them, as if intentionally, the heaviest fragments which lay near.

"And now, friend," said Elliot, as the unreasonable Dwarf indicated another stone larger than any they had moved, "Earnscliff may do as he likes; but be ye man or be ye waur, deil be in my fingers if I break my back wi' heaving thae stanes ony langer like a barrow-man, without getting sae muckle as thanks for my pains."

"Thanks!" exclaimed the Dwarf, with a motion expressive of the utmost contempt — "There — take them, and fatten upon them! Take them, and may they thrive with you as they have done with me — as they have done with every mortal worm that ever heard the word spoken by his fellow reptile! Hence — either labour or begone!"

"This is a fine reward we have, Earnscliff, for building a tabernacle for the devil, and prejudicing our ain souls into the bargain, for what we ken."

"Our presence," answered Earnscliff, "seems only to irritate his frenzy; we had better leave him, and send some one to provide him with food and necessaries."

They did so. The servant dispatched for this purpose found the Dwarf still labouring at his wall, but could not extract a word from him. The lad, infected with the superstitions of the country, did

not long persist in an attempt to intrude questions or advice on so singular a figure, but having placed the articles which he had brought for his use on a stone at some distance, he left them at the misanthrope's disposal.

The Dwarf proceeded in his labours, day after day, with an assiduity so incredible as to appear almost supernatural. In one day he often seemed to have done the work of two men, and his building soon assumed the appearance of the walls of a hut, which, though very small, and constructed only of stones and turf, without any mortar, exhibited, from the unusual size of the stones employed, an appearance of solidity very uncommon for a cottage of such narrow dimensions and rude construction. Earnscliff, attentive to his motions, no sooner perceived to what they tended, than he sent down a number of spars of wood suitable for forming the roof, which he caused to be left in the neighbourhood of the spot, resolving next day to send workmen to put them up. But his purpose was anticipated, for in the evening, during the night, and early in the morning, the Dwarf had laboured so hard, and with such ingenuity, that he had nearly completed the adjustment of the rafters. His next labour was to cut rushes and thatch his dwelling, a task which he performed with singular dexterity.

As he seemed averse to receive any aid beyond the occasional assistance of a passenger, materials suitable to his purpose, and tools, were supplied to him, in the use of which he proved to be skilful. He constructed the door and window of his cot, he adjusted a rude bedstead, and a few shelves, and appeared to become somewhat soothed in his temper as his accommodations increased.

His next task was to form a strong enclosure, and to cultivate the land within it to the best of his power; until, by transporting mould, and working up what was upon the spot, he formed a patch of garden-ground. It must be naturally supposed, that, as above hinted, this solitary being received assistance occasionally from such travellers as crossed the moor by chance, as well as from several who went from curiosity to visit his works. It was, indeed, impossible to see a human creature, so unfitted, at first sight, for hard labour, toiling with such unremitting assiduity, without stopping a few minutes to aid him in his task; and, as no one of his occasional assistants was acquainted with the degree of help which the Dwarf had received from others, the celerity of his progress lost none of its marvels in their eyes. The strong and compact appearance of the cottage, formed in so very short a space, and by such a being, and the superior skill which he displayed in mechanics, and in other arts, gave suspicion to the surrounding neighbours. They insisted, that, if he was not a phantom, — an opinion which was now abandoned, since he plainly appeared a being of blood and bone with themselves, — yet he must be in close league with the invisible world, and have chosen that sequestered spot to carry on his communication with them undisturbed. They insisted, though in a different sense from the philospher's application of the phrase, that he was never less alone than when alone; and that from the heights which commanded the moor at a distance, passengers often discovered a person at work along with this dweller of the desert, who regularly disappeared as soon as they approached closer to the cottage. Such a figure was also occasionally seen

sitting beside him at the door, walking with him in the moor, or assisting him in fetching water from his fountain. Earnscliff explained this phenomenon by supposing it to be the Dwarf's shadow.

"Deil a shadow has he,"(*e*) replied Hobbie Elliot, who was a strenuous defender of the general opinion; "he's ower far in wi' the Auld Ane to have a shadow. Besides," he argued more logically, "wha ever heard of a shadow that cam between a body and the sun? and this thing, be it what it will, is thinner and taller than the body himsell, and has been seen to come between him and the sun mair than anes or twice either."

These suspicions, which, in any other part of the country, might have been attended with investigations a little inconvenient to the supposed wizard, were here only productive of respect and awe. The recluse being seemed somewhat gratified by the marks of timid veneration with which an occasional passenger approached his dwelling, the look of startled surprise with which he surveyed his person and his premises, and the hurried step with which he pressed his retreat as he passed the awful spot. The boldest only stopped to gratify their curiosity by a hasty glance at the walls of his cottage and garden, and to apologize for it by a courteous salutation, which the inmate sometimes deigned to return by a word or a nod. Earnscliff often passed that way, and seldom without enquiring after the solitary inmate, who seemed now to have arranged his establishment for life.

It was impossible to engage him in any conversation on his own personal affairs; nor was he communicative or accessible in talking on any other subject whatever, although he seemed to have consider-

ably relented in the extreme ferocity of his misanthropy, or rather to be less frequently visited with the fits of derangement of which this was a symptom. No argument could prevail upon him to accept any thing beyond the simplest necessaries, although much more was offered by Earnscliff out of charity, and by his more superstitious neighbours from other motives. The benefits of these last he repaid by advice, when consulted (as at length he slowly was) on their diseases, or those of their cattle. He often furnished them with medicines also, and seemed possessed, not only of such as were the produce of the country, but of foreign drugs. He gave these persons to understand, that his name was Elshender the Recluse; but his popular epithet soon came to be Canny Elshie, or the Wise Wight of Mucklestane-Moor. Some extended their queries beyond their bodily complaints, and requested advice upon other matters, which he delivered with an oracular shrewdness that greatly confirmed the opinion of his possessing preternatural skill. The querists usually left some offering upon a stone, at a distance from his dwelling; if it was money, or any article which did not suit him to accept, he either threw it away, or suffered it to remain where it was without making use of it. On all occasions his manners were rude and unsocial; and his words, in number, just sufficient to express his meaning as briefly as possible, and he shunned all communication that went a syllable beyond the matter in hand. When winter had passed away, and his garden began to afford him herbs and vegetables, he confined himself almost entirely to those articles of food. He accepted, notwithstanding, a pair of she-goats from Earns-

cliff, which fed on the moor, and supplied him with milk.

When Earnscliff found his gift had been received, he soon afterwards paid the hermit a visit. The old man was seated on a broad flat stone near his garden door, which was the seat of science he usually occupied when disposed to receive his patients or clients. The inside of his hut, and that of his garden, he kept as sacred from human intrusion as the natives of Otaheite do their Morai;—apparently he would have deemed it polluted by the step of any human being. When he shut himself up in his habitation, no entreaty could prevail upon him to make himself visible, or to give audience to any one whomsoever.

Earnscliff had been fishing in a small river at some distance. He had his rod in his hand, and his basket, filled with trout, at his shoulder. He sate down upon a stone nearly opposite to the Dwarf, who, familiarized with his presence, took no farther notice of him than by elevating his huge misshapen head for the purpose of staring at him, and then again sinking it upon his bosom, as if in profound meditation. Earnscliff looked around him, and observed that the hermit had increased his accommodations by the construction of a shed for the reception of his goats.

"You labour hard, Elshie," he said, willing to lead this singular being into conversation.

"Labour," re-echoed the Dwarf, "is the mildest evil of a lot so miserable as that of mankind; better to labour like me, than sport like you."

"I cannot defend the humanity of our ordinary rural sports, Elshie, and yet"——

"And yet," interrupted the Dwarf, "they are

better than your ordinary business; better to exercise idle and wanton cruelty on mute fishes than on your fellow-creatures. Yet why should I say so? Why should not the whole human herd butt, gore, and gorge upon each other, till all are extirpated but one huge and over-fed Behemoth, and he, when he had throttled and gnawed the bones of all his fellows — he, when his prey failed him, to be roaring whole days for lack of food, and, finally, to die, inch by inch, of famine — it were a consummation worthy of the race!"

"Your deeds are better, Elshie, than your words," answered Earnscliff; "you labour to preserve the race whom your misanthropy slanders."

"I do; but why? — Hearken. You are one on whom I look with the least loathing, and I care not, if, contrary to my wont, I waste a few words in compassion to your infatuated blindness. If I cannot send disease into families, and murrain among the herds, can I attain the same end so well as by prolonging the lives of those who can serve the purpose of destruction as effectually? — If Alice of Bower had died in winter, would young Ruthwin have been slain for her love the last spring? — Who thought of penning their cattle beneath the tower when the Red Reiver of Westburnflat was deemed to be on his death-bed? — My draughts, my skill, recovered him. And, now, who dare leave his herd upon the lea without a watch, or go to bed without unchaining the sleuth-hound?"

"I own," answered Earnscliff, "you did little good to society by the last of these cures. But, to balance the evil, there is my friend Hobbie, honest Hobbie of the Heugh-foot, your skill relieved him last winter in a fever that might have cost him his life."

"Thus think the children of clay in their ignorance," said the Dwarf, smiling maliciously, "and thus they speak in their folly. Have you marked the young cub of a wild cat that has been domesticated, how sportive, how playful, how gentle, — but trust him with your game, your lambs, your poultry, his inbred ferocity breaks forth; he gripes, tears, ravages, and devours."

"Such is the animal's instinct," answered Earnscliff; "but what has that to do with Hobbie?"

"It is his emblem — it is his picture," retorted the Recluse. "He is at present tame, quiet, and domesticated, for lack of opportunity to exercise his inborn propensities; but let the trumpet of war sound — let the young blood-hound snuff blood, he will be as ferocious as the wildest of his Border ancestors that ever fired a helpless peasant's abode. Can you deny, that even at present he often urges you to take bloody revenge for an injury received when you were a boy?" —Earnscliff started; the Recluse appeared not to observe his surprise, and proceeded — "The trumpet *will* blow, the young blood-hound *will* lap blood, and I will laugh and say, For this I have preserved thee!" He paused, and continued, — "Such are my cures; — their object, their purpose, perpetuating the mass of misery, and playing even in this desert my part in the general tragedy. Were *you* on your sick bed, I might, in compassion, send you a cup of poison."

"I am much obliged to you, Elshie, and certainly shall not fail to consult you, with so comfortable a hope from your assistance."

"Do not flatter yourself too far," replied the Hermit, "with the hope that I will positively yield to the frailty of pity. Why should I snatch a dupe, so

well fitted to endure the miseries of life as you are, from the wretchedness which his own visions, and the villainy of the world, are preparing for him? Why should I play the compassionate Indian, and, knocking out the brains of the captive with my tomahawk, at once spoil the three days' amusement of my kindred tribe, at the very moment when the brands were lighted, the pincers heated, the cauldrons boiling, the knives sharpened, to tear, scorch, seethe, and scarify the intended victim?"

"A dreadful picture you present to me of life, Elshie; but I am not daunted by it," returned Earnscliff. "We are sent here, in one sense, to bear and to suffer; but, in another, to do and to enjoy. The active day has its evening of repose; even patient sufferance has its alleviations, where there is a consolatory sense of duty discharged."

"I spurn at the slavish and bestial doctrine," said the Dwarf, his eyes kindling with insane fury,—"I spurn at it, as worthy only of the beasts that perish; but I will waste no more words with you."

He rose hastily; but, ere he withdrew into the hut, he added, with great vehemence, "Yet, lest you still think my apparent benefits to mankind flow from the stupid and servile source, called love of our fellow-creatures, know, that were there a man who had annihilated my soul's dearest hope — who had torn my heart to mammocks, and seared my brain till it glowed like a volcano, and were that man's fortune and life in my power as completely as this frail potsherd," (he snatched up an earthen cup which stood beside him,) "I would not dash him into atoms thus" — (he flung the vessel with fury against the wall,) — "No!" (he spoke more composedly, but with the utmost bitterness,) "I would pamper him

with wealth and power to inflame his evil passions, and to fulfil his evil designs; he should lack no means of vice and villainy; he should be the centre of a whirlpool that itself should know neither rest nor peace, but boil with unceasing fury, while it wrecked every goodly ship that approached its limits! he should be an earthquake capable of shaking the very land in which he dwelt, and rendering all its inhabitants friendless, outcast, and miserable — as I am!"

The wretched being rushed into his hut as he uttered these last words, shutting the door with furious violence, and rapidly drawing two bolts, one after another, as if to exclude the intrusion of any one of that hated race, who had thus lashed his soul to frenzy. Earnscliff left the moor with mingled sensations of pity and horror, pondering what strange and melancholy cause could have reduced to so miserable a state of mind, a man whose language argued him to be of rank and education much superior to the vulgar. He was also surprised to see how much particular information a person who had lived in that country so short a time, and in so recluse a manner, had been able to collect respecting the dispositions and private affairs of the inhabitants.

"It is no wonder," he said to himself, "that with such extent of information, such a mode of life, so uncouth a figure, and sentiments so virulently misanthropic, this unfortunate should be regarded by the vulgar as in league with the Enemy of Mankind."

CHAPTER V.

> The bleakest rock upon the loneliest heath
> Feels, in its barrenness, some touch of spring;
> And, in the April dew, or beam of May,
> Its moss and lichen freshen and revive;
> And thus the heart, most sear'd to human pleasure,
> Melts at the tear, joys in the smile, of woman.
>
> BEAUMONT.

As the season advanced, the weather became more genial, and the Recluse was more frequently found occupying the broad flat stone in the front of his mansion. As he sate there one day, about the hour of noon, a party of gentlemen and ladies, well mounted, and numerously attended, swept across the heath at some distance from his dwelling. Dogs, hawks, and led-horses, swelled the retinue, and the air resounded at intervals with the cheer of the hunters, and the sound of horns blown by the attendants. The Recluse was about to retire into his mansion at the sight of a train so joyous, when three young ladies, with their attendants, who had made a circuit, and detached themselves from their party, in order to gratify their curiosity by a sight of the Wise Wight of Mucklestane-Moor, came suddenly up, ere he could effect his purpose. The first shrieked, and put her hands before her eyes, at sight of an object so unusually deformed. The second, with a hysterical giggle, which she intended should disguise her terrors, asked the Recluse, whether he

could tell their fortune. The third, who was best mounted, best dressed, and incomparably the best-looking of the three, advanced, as if to cover the incivility of her companions.

"We have lost the right path that leads through these morasses, and our party have gone forward without us," said the young lady. "Seeing you, father, at the door of your house, we have turned this way to"——

"Hush!" interrupted the Dwarf; "so young, and already so artful? You came — you know you came, to exult in the consciousness of your own youth, wealth, and beauty, by contrasting them with age, poverty, and deformity. It is a fit employment for the daughter of your father; but O how unlike the child of your mother!"

"Did you, then, know my parents, and do you know me?"

"Yes; this is the first time you have crossed my waking eyes, but I have seen you in my dreams."

"Your dreams?"

"Ay, Isabel Vere. What hast thou, or thine, to do with my waking thoughts?"

"Your waking thoughts, sir," said the second of Miss Vere's companions, with a sort of mock gravity, "are fixed, doubtless, upon wisdom; folly can only intrude on your sleeping moments."

"Over thine," retorted the Dwarf, more splenetically than became a philosopher or hermit, "folly exercises an unlimited empire, asleep or awake."

"Lord bless us!" said the lady, "he's a prophet, sure enough."

"As surely," continued the Recluse, "as thou art a woman. — A woman! — I should have said a lady — a fine lady. You asked me to tell your fortune

— it is a simple one; an endless chase through life after follies not worth catching, and, when caught, successively thrown away — a chase, pursued from the days of tottering infancy to those of old age upon his crutches. Toys and merry-makings in childhood — love and its absurdities in youth — spadille and basto in age, shall succeed each other as objects of pursuit — flowers and butterflies in spring — butterflies and thistle-down in summer — withered leaves in autumn and winter — all pursued, all caught, all flung aside. — Stand apart; your fortune is said."

"All *caught*, however," retorted the laughing fair one, who was a cousin of Miss Vere's; "that's something, Nancy," she continued, turning to the timid damsel who had first approached the Dwarf; "will you ask your fortune?"

"Not for worlds," said she, drawing back; "I have heard enough of yours."

"Well, then," said Miss Ilderton, offering money to the Dwarf, "I'll pay for mine, as if it were spoken by an oracle to a princess."

"Truth," said the Soothsayer, "can neither be bought nor sold;" and he pushed back her proffered offering with morose disdain.

"Well, then," said the lady, "I'll keep my money, Mr. Elshender, to assist me in the chase I am to pursue."

"You will need it," replied the cynic; "without it, few pursue successfully, and fewer are themselves pursued. — Stop!" he said to Miss Vere, as her companions moved off, "with you I have more to say. You have what your companions would wish to have, or be thought to have, — beauty, wealth, station, accomplishments."

"Forgive my following my companions, father; I am proof both to flattery and fortune-telling."

"Stay," continued the Dwarf, with his hand on her horse's rein, "I am no common soothsayer, and I am no flatterer. All the advantages I have detailed, all and each of them have their corresponding evils — unsuccessful love, crossed affections, the gloom of a convent, or an odious alliance. I, who wish ill to all mankind, cannot wish more evil to you, so much is your course of life crossed by it."

"And if it be, father, let me enjoy the readiest solace of adversity while prosperity is in my power. You are old; you are poor; your habitation is far from human aid, were you ill, or in want; your situation, in many respects, exposes you to the suspicions of the vulgar, which are too apt to break out into actions of brutality. Let me think I have mended the lot of one human being! Accept of such assistance as I have power to offer; do this for my sake, if not for your own, that when these evils arise, which you prophesy perhaps too truly, I may not have to reflect, that the hours of my happier time have been passed altogether in vain."

The old man answered with a broken voice, and almost without addressing himself to the young lady, —

"Yes, 'tis thus thou shouldst think — 'tis thus thou shouldst speak, if ever human speech and thought kept touch with each other! They do not — they do not — Alas! they cannot. And yet — wait here an instant — stir not till my return." He went to his little garden, and returned with a half-blown rose. "Thou hast made me shed a tear, the first which has wet my eyelids for many a year; for that good deed receive this token of gratitude.

It is but a common rose; preserve it, however, and do not part with it. Come to me in your hour of adversity. Show me that rose, or but one leaf of it, were it withered as my heart is — if it should be in my fiercest and wildest movements of rage against a hateful world, still it will recall gentler thoughts to my bosom, and perhaps afford happier prospects to thine. But no message," he exclaimed, rising into his usual mood of misanthropy, — "no message — no go-between! Come thyself; and the heart and the doors that are shut against every other earthly being, shall open to thee and to thy sorrows. And now pass on."

He let go the bridle-rein, and the young lady rode on, after expressing her thanks to this singular being, as well as her surprise at the extraordinary nature of his address would permit, often turning back to look at the Dwarf, who still remained at the door of his habitation, and watched her progress over the moor towards her father's castle of Ellieslaw, until the brow of the hill hid the party from his sight.

The ladies, meantime, jested with Miss Vere on the strange interview they had just had with the far-famed Wizard of the Moor. "Isabella has all the luck at home and abroad! Her hawk strikes down the black-cock; her eyes wound the gallant; no chance for her poor companions and kinswomen; even the conjuror cannot escape the force of her charms. You should, in compassion, cease to be such an engrosser, my dear Isabel, or at least set up shop, and sell off all the goods you do not mean to keep for your own use."

"You shall have them all," replied Miss Vere, "and the conjuror to boot, at a very easy rate."

"No! Nancy shall have the conjuror," said Miss Ilderton, "to supply deficiencies; she's not quite a witch herself, you know."

"Lord, sister," answered the younger Miss Ilderton, "what could I do with so frightful a monster? I kept my eyes shut, after once glancing at him; and, I protest, I thought I saw him still, though I winked as close as ever I could."

"That's a pity," said her sister; "ever while you live, Nancy, choose an admirer whose faults can be hid by winking at them.— Well, then, I must take him myself, I suppose, and put him into mamma's Japan cabinet, in order to show that Scotland can produce a specimen of mortal clay moulded into a form ten thousand times uglier than the imaginations of Canton and Pekin, fertile as they are in monsters, have immortalized in porcelain."

"There is something," said Miss Vere, "so melancholy in the situation of this poor man, that I cannot enter into your mirth, Lucy, so readily as usual. If he has no resources, how is he to exist in this waste country, living, as he does, at such a distance from mankind? and if he has the means of securing occasional assistance, will not the very suspicion that he is possessed of them, expose him to plunder and assassination by some of our unsettled neighbours?"

"But you forget that they say he is a warlock," said Nancy Ilderton.

"And, if his magic diabolical should fail him," rejoined her sister, "I would have him trust to his magic natural, and thrust his enormous head, and most preternatural visage, out at his door or window, full in view of the assailants. The boldest robber that ever rode would hardly bide a second

glance of him. Well, I wish I had the use of that Gorgon head of his for only one half hour."

"For what purpose, Lucy?" said Miss Vere.

"O! I would frighten out of the castle that dark, stiff, and stately Sir Frederick Langley, that is so great a favourite with your father, and so little a favourite of yours. I protest I shall be obliged to the Wizard as long as I live, if it were only for the half hour's relief from that man's company which we have gained by deviating from the party to visit Elshie."

"What would you say, then," said Miss Vere, in a low tone, so as not to be heard by the younger sister, who rode before them, the narrow path not admitting of their moving all three abreast, — "What would you say, my dearest Lucy, if it were proposed to you to endure his company for life?"

"Say? I would say, *No, no, no*, three times, each louder than another, till they should hear me at Carlisle."

"And Sir Frederick would say then, nineteen nay-says are half a grant."

"That," replied Miss Lucy, "depends entirely on the manner in which the nay-says are said. Mine should have not one grain of concession in them, I promise you."

"But if your father," said Miss Vere, "were to say, — Thus do, or" ——

"I would stand to the consequences of his *or*, were he the most cruel father that ever was recorded in romance, to fill up the alternative."

"And what if he threatened you with a catholic aunt, an abbess, and a cloister?"

"Then," said Miss Ilderton, "I would threaten him with a protestant son-in-law, and be glad of an

opportunity to disobey him for conscience sake. And now that Nancy is out of hearing, let me really say, I think you would be excusable before God and man for resisting this preposterous match by every means in your power. A proud, dark, ambitious man; a caballer against the state; infamous for his avarice and severity; a bad son, a bad brother, unkind and ungenerous to all his relatives — Isabel, I would die rather than have him."

"Don't let my father hear you give me such advice," said Miss Vere, "or adieu, my dear Lucy, to Ellieslaw-Castle."

"And adieu to Ellieslaw-Castle, with all my heart," said her friend, "if I once saw you fairly out of it, and settled under some kinder protector than he whom nature has given you. O, if my poor father had been in his former health, how gladly would he have received and sheltered you, till this ridiculous and cruel persecution were blown over!"

"Would to God it had been so, my dear Lucy!" answered Isabella; "but I fear, that, in your father's weak state of health, he would be altogether unable to protect me against the means which would be immediately used for reclaiming the poor fugitive."

"I fear so indeed," replied Miss Ilderton; "but we will consider and devise something. Now that your father and his guests seem so deeply engaged in some mysterious plot, to judge from the passing and returning of messages, from the strange faces which appear and disappear without being announced by their names, from the collecting and cleaning of arms, and the anxious gloom and bustle which seem to agitate every male in the castle, it may not be impossible for us (always in case matters be driven to extremity) to shape out some little

supplemental conspiracy of our own. I hope the gentlemen have not kept all the policy to themselves; and there is one associate that I would gladly admit to our counsel."

"Not Nancy?"

"O, no!" said Miss Ilderton; "Nancy, though an excellent good girl, and fondly attached to you, would make a dull conspirator — as dull as Renault and all the other subordinate plotters in Venice Preserved. No; this is a Jaffier, or Pierre, if you like the character better; and yet, though I know I shall please you, I am afraid to mention his name to you, lest I vex you at the same time. Can you not guess? Something about an eagle and a rock — it does not begin with eagle in English, but something very like it in Scotch."

"You cannot mean young Earnscliff, Lucy?" said Miss Vere, blushing deeply.

"And whom else should I mean?" said Lucy. "Jaffiers and Pierres are very scarce in this country, I take it, though one could find Renaults and Bedamars enow."

"How can you talk so wildly, Lucy? Your plays and romances have positively turned your brain. You know, that, independent of my father's consent, without which I never will marry any one, and which, in the case you point at, would never be granted; independent, too, of our knowing nothing of young Earnscliff's inclinations, but by your own wild conjectures and fancies — besides all this, there is the fatal brawl!"

"When his father was killed?" said Lucy. "But that was very long ago; and I hope we have outlived the time of bloody feud, when a quarrel was carried down between two families from father to

son, like a Spanish game at chess, and a murder or two committed in every generation, just to keep the matter from going to sleep. We do with our quarrels now-a-days as with our clothes; cut them out for ourselves, and wear them out in our own day, and should no more think of resenting our fathers' feuds, than of wearing their slashed doublets and trunk-hose."

"You treat this far too lightly, Lucy," answered Miss Vere.

"Not a bit, my dear Isabella," said Lucy. "Consider, your father, though present in the unhappy affray, is never supposed to have struck the fatal blow; besides, in former times, in case of mutual slaughter between clans, subsequent alliances were so far from being excluded, that the hand of a daughter or a sister was the most frequent gage of reconciliation. You laugh at my skill in romance; but, I assure you, should your history be written, like that of many a less distressed and less deserving heroine, the well-judging reader would set you down for the lady and the love of Earnscliff, from the very obstacle which you suppose so insurmountable."

"But these are not the days of romance, but of sad reality, for there stands the castle of Ellieslaw."

"And there stands Sir Frederick Langley at the gate, waiting to assist the ladies from their palfreys. I would as lief touch a toad; I will disappoint him, and take old Horsington the groom for my master of the horse."

So saying, the lively young lady switched her palfrey forward, and passing Sir Frederick with a familiar nod as he stood ready to take her horse's rein, she cantered on, and jumped into the arms of

the old groom. Fain would Isabella have done the same had she dared; but her father stood near, displeasure already darkening on a countenance peculiarly qualified to express the harsher passions, and she was compelled to receive the unwelcome assiduities of her detested suitor.

CHAPTER VI.

Let not us that are squires of the night's body be called thieves of the day's booty; let us be Diana's foresters, gentlemen of the shade, minions of the moon.

Henry the Fourth, Part I.

THE Solitary had consumed the remainder of that day in which he had the interview with the young ladies, within the precincts of his garden. Evening again found him seated on his favourite stone. The sun setting red, and among seas of rolling clouds, threw a gloomy lustre over the moor, and gave a deeper purple to the broad outline of heathy mountains which surrounded this desolate spot. The Dwarf sate watching the clouds as they lowered above each other in masses of conglomerated vapours, and, as a strong lurid beam of the sinking luminary darted full on his solitary and uncouth figure, he might well have seemed the demon of the storm which was gathering, or some gnome summoned forth from the recesses of the earth by the subterranean signals of its approach. As he sate thus, with his dark eye turned towards the scowling and blackening heaven, a horseman rode rapidly up to him, and stopping, as if to let his horse breathe for an instant, made a sort of obeisance to the anchoret, with an air betwixt effrontery and embarrassment.

The figure of the rider was thin, tall, and slender, but remarkably athletic, bony, and sinewy; like one who had all his life followed those violent exercises

which prevent the human form from increasing in bulk, while they harden and confirm by habit its muscular powers. His face, sharp-featured, sunburnt, and freckled, had a sinister expression of violence, impudence, and cunning, each of which seemed alternately to predominate over the others. Sandy-coloured hair, and reddish eyebrows, from under which looked forth his sharp grey eyes, completed the inauspicious outline of the horseman's physiognomy. He had pistols in his holsters, and another pair peeped from his belt, though he had taken some pains to conceal them by buttoning his doublet. He wore a rusted steel head-piece; a buff jacket of rather an antique cast; gloves, of which that for the right hand was covered with small scales of iron, like an ancient gauntlet; and a long broadsword completed his equipage.

"So," said the Dwarf, "rapine and murder once more on horseback."

"On horseback?" said the bandit; "ay, ay, Elshie, your leech-craft has set me on the bonny bay again."

"And all those promises of amendment which you made during your illness forgotten?" continued Elshender.

"All clear away, with the water-saps and panada," returned the unabashed convalescent. "Ye ken, Elshie, for they say ye are weel acquent wi' the gentleman,

> 'When the devil was sick, the devil a monk would be,
> When the devil was well, the devil a monk was he.'"

"Thou say'st true," said the Solitary; "as well divide a wolf from his appetite for carnage, or a raven from her scent of slaughter, as thee from thy accursed propensities."

"Why, what would you have me to do? It's born with me — lies in my very blude and bane. Why, man, the lads of Westburnflat, for ten lang descents, have been reivers and lifters. They have all drunk hard, lived high, taking deep revenge for light offence, and never wanted gear for the winning."

"Right; and thou art as thorough-bred a wolf," said the Dwarf, "as ever leapt a lamb-fold at night. On what hell's errand art thou bound now?"

"Can your skill not guess?"

"Thus far I know," said the Dwarf, "that thy purpose is bad, thy deed will be worse, and the issue worst of all."

"And you like me the better for it, Father Elshie, eh?" said Westburnflat; "you always said you did."

"I have cause to like all," answered the Solitary, "that are scourges to their fellow-creatures, and thou art a bloody one."

"No — I say not guilty to that — never bluidy unless there's resistance, and that sets a man's bristles up, ye ken. And this is nae great matter, after a'; just to cut the comb of a young cock that has been crawing a little ower crousely."

"Not young Earnscliff?" said the Solitary, with some emotion.

"No; not young Earnscliff — not young Earnscliff *yet;* but his time may come, if he will not take warning, and get him back to the burrow-town that he's fit for, and no keep skelping about here, destroying the few deer that are left in the country, and pretending to act as a magistrate, and writing letters to the great folk at Auld Reekie, about the disturbed state of the land. Let him take care o' himsell."

"Then it must be Hobbie of the Heugh-foot," said Elshie. "What harm has the lad done you?"

"Harm! nae great harm; but I hear he says I staid away from the Ba'spiel on Fastern's E'en, for fear of him; and it was only for fear of the Country Keeper, for there was a warrant against me. I'll stand Hobbie's feud, and a' his clan's. But it's not so much for that, as to gie him a lesson not to let his tongue gallop ower freely about his betters. I trow he will hae lost the best pen-feather o' his wing before to-morrow morning. — Farewell, Elshie; there's some canny boys waiting for me down amang the shaws, owerby; I will see you as I come back, and bring ye a blithe tale in return for your leech-craft."

Ere the Dwarf could collect himself to reply, the Reiver of Westburnflat set spurs to his horse. The animal, starting at one of the stones which lay scattered about, flew from the path. The rider exercised his spurs without moderation or mercy. The horse became furious, reared, kicked, plunged, and bolted like a deer, with all his four feet off the ground at once. It was in vain; the unrelenting rider sate as if he had been a part of the horse which he bestrode; and, after a short but furious contest, compelled the subdued animal to proceed upon the path at a rate which soon carried him out of sight of the Solitary.

"That villain," exclaimed the Dwarf, — "that cool-blooded, hardened, unrelenting ruffian, — that wretch, whose every thought is infected with crimes, — has thewes and sinews, limbs, strength, and activity enough, to compel a nobler animal than himself to carry him to the place where he is to perpetrate his wickedness; while I, had I the weakness to

wish to put his wretched victim on his guard, and to save the helpless family, would see my good intentions frustrated by the decrepitude which chains me to the spot. — Why should I wish it were otherwise? What have my screech-owl voice, my hideous form, and my mis-shapen features, to do with the fairer workmanship of nature? Do not men receive even my benefits with shrinking horror and ill-suppressed disgust? And why should I interest myself in a race which accounts me a prodigy and an outcast, and which has treated me as such? No; by all the ingratitude which I have reaped — by all the wrongs which I have sustained — by my imprisonment, my stripes, my chains, I will wrestle down my feelings of rebellious humanity! I will not be the fool I have been, to swerve from my principles whenever there was an appeal, forsooth, to my feelings; as if I, towards whom none show sympathy, ought to have sympathy with any one. Let Destiny drive forth her scythed car through the overwhelmed and trembling mass of humanity! Shall I be the idiot to throw this decrepit form, this mis-shapen lump of mortality, under her wheels, that the Dwarf, the Wizard, the Hunch-back, may save from destruction some fair form or some active frame, and all the world clap their hands at the exchange? No, never! — And yet this Elliot — this Hobbie, so young and gallant, so frank, so — I will think of it no longer. I cannot aid him if I would, and I am resolved — firmly resolved, that I would not aid him, if a wish were the pledge of his safety!"

Having thus ended his soliloquy, he retreated into his hut for shelter from the storm which was fast approaching, and now began to burst in large

and heavy drops of rain. The last rays of the sun now disappeared entirely, and two or three claps of distant thunder followed each other at brief intervals, echoing and re-echoing among the range of heathy fells like the sound of a distant engagement.

CHAPTER VII.

> Proud bird of the mountain, thy plume shall be torn! —
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Return to thy dwelling; all lonely, return;
> For the blackness of ashes shall mark where it stood,
> And a wild mother scream o'er her famishing brood.
>
> CAMPBELL.

THE night continued sullen and stormy; but morning rose as if refreshed by the rains. Even the Mucklestane-Moor, with its broad bleak swells of barren grounds, interspersed with marshy pools of water, seemed to smile under the serene influence of the sky, just as good-humour can spread a certain inexpressible charm over the plainest human countenance. The heath was in its thickest and deepest bloom. The bees, which the Solitary had added to his rural establishment, were abroad and on the wing, and filled the air with the murmurs of their industry. As the old man crept out of his little hut, his two she-goats came to meet him, and licked his hands in gratitude for the vegetables with which he supplied them from his garden. "You, at least," he said — "you, at least, see no differences in form which can alter your feelings to a benefactor — to you, the finest shape that ever statuary moulded would be an object of indifference or of alarm, should it present itself instead of the misshapen trunk to whose services you are accustomed. While I was in the world, did I ever meet with such a return of gratitude? No; the domestic whom I

had bred from infancy made mouths at me as he stood behind my chair; the friend whom I had supported with my fortune, and for whose sake I had even stained —— (he stopped with a strong convulsive shudder,) even he thought me more fit for the society of lunatics — for their disgraceful restraints — for their cruel privations, than for communication with the rest of humanity. Hubert alone — and Hubert too will one day abandon me. All are of a piece, one mass of wickedness, selfishness, and ingratitude — wretches, who sin even in their devotions; and of such hardness of heart, that they do not, without hypocrisy, even thank the Deity himself for his warm sun and pure air."

As he was plunged in these gloomy soliloquies, he heard the tramp of a horse on the other side of his enclosure, and a strong clear bass voice singing with the liveliness inspired by a light heart,

> Canny Hobbie Elliot, canny Hobbie now,
> Canny Hobbie Elliot, I'se gang alang wi' you.

At the same moment, a large deer greyhound sprung over the hermit's fence. It is well known to the sportsmen in these wilds, that the appearance and scent of the goat so much resemble those of their usual objects of chase, that the best-broke greyhounds will sometimes fly upon them. (*f*) The dog in question instantly pulled down and throttled one of the hermit's she-goats, while Hobbie Elliot, who came up, and jumped from his horse for the purpose, was unable to extricate the harmless animal from the fangs of his attendant until it was expiring. The Dwarf eyed, for a few moments, the convulsive starts of his dying favourite, until the poor goat stretched out her limbs with the twitches

and shivering fit of the last agony. He then started into an access of frenzy, and unsheathing a long sharp knife, or dagger, which he wore under his coat, he was about to launch it at the dog, when Hobbie, perceiving his purpose, interposed, and caught hold of his hand, exclaiming, "Let a be the hound, man — let a be the hound! — Na, na, Killbuck maunna be guided that gate, neither."

The Dwarf turned his rage on the young farmer; and, by a sudden effort, far more powerful than Hobbie expected from such a person, freed his wrist from his grasp, and offered the dagger at his heart. All this was done in the twinkling of an eye, and the incensed Recluse might have completed his vengeance by plunging the weapon in Elliot's bosom, had he not been checked by an internal impulse which made him hurl the knife to a distance.

"No," he exclaimed, as he thus voluntarily deprived himself of the means of gratifying his rage; "not again — not again!"

Hobbie retreated a step or two in great surprise, discomposure, and disdain, at having been placed in such danger by an object apparently so contemptible.

"The deil's in the body for strength and bitterness!" were the first words that escaped him, which he followed up with an apology for the accident that had given rise to their disagreement. "I am no justifying Killbuck a'thegither neither, and I am sure it is as vexing to me as to you, Elshie, that the mischance should hae happened; but I'll send you twa goats and twa fat gimmers, man, to make a' straight again. A wise man like you shouldna bear malice against a poor dumb thing;

ye see that a goat's like first-cousin to a deer, sae he acted but according to his nature after a'. Had it been a pet-lamb, there wad hae been mair to be said. Ye suld keep sheep, Elshie, and no goats, where there's sae mony deer-hounds about — but I'll send ye baith."

"Wretch!" said the Hermit, "your cruelty has destroyed one of the only creatures in existence that would look on me with kindness!"

"Dear Elshie," answered Hobbie, "I'm wae ye suld hae cause to say sae; I'm sure it wasna wi' my will. And yet, it's true, I should hae minded your goats, and coupled up the dogs. I'm sure I would rather they had worried the primest wether in my faulds. — Come, man, forget and forgie. I'm e'en as vexed as ye can be — But I am a bridegroom, ye see, and that puts a' things out o' my head, I think. There's the marriage-dinner, or gude part o't, that my twa brithers are bringing on a sled round by the Riders' Slack, three goodly bucks as ever ran on Dallomlea, as the sang says; they couldna come the straight road for the saft grund. I wad send ye a bit venison, but ye wadna take it weel maybe, for Killbuck catched it."

During this long speech, in which the good-natured Borderer endeavoured to propitiate the offended Dwarf by every argument he could think of, he heard him with his eyes bent on the ground, as if in the deepest meditation, and at length broke forth — "Nature? — yes! it is indeed in the usual beaten path of Nature. The strong gripe and throttle the weak; the rich depress and despoil the needy; the happy (those who are idiots enough to think themselves happy) insult the misery and diminish the consolation of the wretched. — Go

hence, thou who hast contrived to give an additional pang to the most miserable of human beings — thou who hast deprived me of what I half considered as a source of comfort. Go hence, and enjoy the happiness prepared for thee at home!"

"Never stir," said Hobbie, "if I wadna take you wi' me, man, if ye wad but say it wad divert ye to be at the bridal on Monday. There will be a hundred strapping Elliots to ride the brouze — the like's no been seen sin' the days of auld Martin of the Preakin-tower — I wad send the sled for ye wi' a canny powny."

"Is it to me you propose once more to mix in the society of the common herd?" said the Recluse, with an air of deep disgust.

"Commons!" retorted Hobbie, "nae siccan commons neither; the Elliots hae been lang kend a gentle race."

"Hence! begone!" reiterated the Dwarf; "may the same evil luck attend thee that thou hast left behind with me! If I go not with you myself, see if you can escape what my attendants, Wrath and Misery, have brought to thy threshold before thee."

"I wish ye wadna speak that gate," said Hobbie. "Ye ken yoursell, Elshie, naebody judges you to be ower canny; now, I'll tell ye just ae word for a' — ye hae spoken as muckle as wussing ill to me and mine; now, if ony mischance happen to Grace, which God forbid, or to mysell, or to the poor dumb tyke; or if I be skaithed and injured in body, gudes, or gear, I'll no forget wha it is that it's owing to."

"Out, hind!" exclaimed the Dwarf; "home! home to your dwelling, and think on me when you find what has befallen there."

"Aweel, aweel," said Hobbie, mounting his horse, "it serves naething to strive wi' cripples,—they are aye cankered; but I'll just tell ye ae thing, neighbour, that if things be otherwise than weel wi' Grace Armstrong, I'se gie you a scouther if there be a tar-barrel in the five parishes."

So saying, he rode off; and Elshie, after looking at him with a scornful and indignant laugh, took spade and mattock, and occupied himself in digging a grave for his deceased favourite.

A low whistle, and the words, "Hisht, Elshie, hisht!" disturbed him in this melancholy occupation. He looked up, and the Red Reiver of Westburnflat was before him. Like Banquo's murderer, there was blood on his face, as well as upon the rowels of his spurs and the sides of his over-ridden horse.

"How now, ruffian?" demanded the Dwarf, "is thy job chared?"

"Ay, ay, doubt not that, Elshie," answered the freebooter; "when I ride, my foes may moan. They have had mair light than comfort at the Heugh-foot this morning; there's a toom byre and a wide, and a wail and a cry for the bonny bride."

"The bride?"

"Ay; Charlie Cheat-the-Woodie, as we ca' him, that's Charlie Foster of Tinning Beck, has promised to keep her in Cumberland till the blast blaw by. She saw me, and kend me in the splore, for the mask fell frae my face for a blink. I am thinking it wad concern my safety if she were to come back here, for there's mony o' the Elliots, and they band weel thegither for right or wrang. Now, what I chiefly come to ask your rede in, is how to make her sure?"

"Wouldst thou murder her, then?"

"Umph! no, no; that I would not do, if I could help it. But they say they can whiles get folk cannily away to the plantations from some of the outports, and something to boot for them that brings a bonny wench. They're wanted beyond seas thae female cattle, and they're no that scarce here. But I think o' doing better for this lassie. There's a leddy, that, unless she be a' the better bairn, is to be sent to foreign parts whether she will or no; now, I think of sending Grace to wait on her—she's a bonny lassie. Hobbie will hae a merry morning when he comes hame, and misses baith bride and gear."

"Ay; and do you not pity him?" said the Recluse.

"Wad he pity me were I gaeing up the Castle hill at Jeddart?[1] And yet I rue something for the bit lassie; but he'll get anither, and little skaith dune — ane is as gude as anither. And now, you that like to hear o' splores, heard ye ever o' a better ane than I hae had this morning?"

"Air, ocean, and fire," said the Dwarf, speaking to himself, "the earthquake, the tempest, the volcano, are all mild and moderate, compared to the wrath of man. And what is this fellow, but one more skilled than others in executing the end of his existence?—Hear me, felon, go again where I before sent thee."

"To the Steward?"

"Ay; and tell him, Elshender the Recluse commands him to give thee gold. But, hear me, let the maiden be discharged free and uninjured; return

[1] The place of execution at that ancient burgh, where many of Westburnflat's profession have made their final exit.

her to her friends, and let her swear not to discover thy villainy."

"Swear?" said Westburnflat; "but what if she break her aith? Women are not famous for keeping their plight. A wise man like you should ken that. — And uninjured — wha kens what may happen were she to be left lang at Tinning Beck? Charlie Cheat-the-Woodie is a rough customer. But if the gold could be made up to twenty pieces, I think I could ensure her being wi' her friends within the twenty-four hours."

The Dwarf took his tablets from his pocket, marked a line on them, and tore out the leaf. "There," he said, giving the robber the leaf — "But, mark me; thou knowest I am not to be fooled by thy treachery; if thou darest to disobey my directions, thy wretched life, be sure, shall answer it."

"I know," said the fellow, looking down, "that you have power on earth, however you came by it; you can do what nae other man can do, baith by physic and foresight; and the gold is shelled down when ye command, as fast as I have seen the ash-keys fall in a frosty morning in October. I will not disobey you."

"Begone, then, and relieve me of thy hateful presence."

The robber set spurs to his horse, and rode off without reply.

Hobbie Elliot had, in the meanwhile, pursued his journey rapidly, harassed by those oppressive and indistinct fears that all was not right, which men usually term a presentiment of misfortune. Ere he reached the top of the bank from which he could look down on his own habitation, he was met by his

nurse, a person then of great consequence in all families in Scotland, whether of the higher or middling classes. The connexion between them and their foster-children was considered a tie far too dearly intimate to be broken ; and it usually happened, in the course of years, that the nurse became a resident in the family of her foster-son, assisting in the domestic duties, and receiving all marks of attention and regard from the heads of the family. So soon as Hobbie recognised the figure of Annaple, in her red cloak and black hood, he could not help exclaiming to himself, " What ill luck can hae brought the auld nurse sae far frae hame, her that never stirs a gun-shot frae the door-stane for ordinar ? — Hout, it will just be to get crane-berries, or whortle-berries, or some such stuff, out of the moss, to make the pies and tarts for the feast on Monday. — I cannot get the words of that cankered auld cripple deil's-buckie out o' my head — the least thing makes me dread some ill news. — O, Killbuck, man ! were there nae deer and goats in the country besides, but ye behoved to gang and worry his creature, by a' other folk's ? "

By this time Annaple, with a brow like a tragic volume, had hobbled towards him, and caught his horse by the bridle. The despair in her look was so evident as to deprive even him of the power of asking the cause. " O my bairn ! " she cried, " gang na forward — gang na forward — it's a sight to kill ony body, let alane thee."

" In God's name, what's the matter ? " said the astonished horseman, endeavouring to extricate his bridle from the grasp of the old woman ; " for Heaven's sake, let me go and see what's the matter."

" Ohon ! that I should have lived to see the

day! — The steading's a' in a low, and the bonny stack-yard lying in the red ashes, and the gear a' driven away. But gang na forward; it wad break your young heart, hinny, to see what my auld een hae seen this morning."

"And who has dared to do this? let go my bridle, Annaple — where is my grandmother — my sisters? — Where is Grace Armstrong? — God! — the words of the warlock are knelling in my ears!"

He sprang from his horse to rid himself of Annaple's interruption, and, ascending the hill with great speed, soon came in view of the spectacle with which she had threatened him. It was indeed a heartbreaking sight. The habitation which he had left in its seclusion, beside the mountain-stream, surrounded with every evidence of rustic plenty, was now a wasted and blackened ruin. From amongst the shattered and sable walls the smoke continued to rise. The turf-stack, the barn-yard, the offices stocked with cattle, all the wealth of an upland cultivator of the period, of which poor Elliot possessed no common share, had been laid waste or carried off in a single night. He stood a moment motionless, and then exclaimed, "I am ruined — ruined to the ground! — But curse on the warld's gear — Had it not been the week before the bridal — But I am nae babe, to sit down and greet about it. If I can but find Grace, and my grandmother, and my sisters weel, I can go to the wars in Flanders, as my gude-sire did, under the Bellenden banner, wi' auld Buccleuch. At ony rate, I will keep up a heart, or they will lose theirs a'thegither."

Manfully strode Hobbie down the hill, resolved to suppress his own despair, and administer conso-

lation which he did not feel. The neighbouring inhabitants of the dell, particularly those of his own name, had already assembled. The younger part were in arms and clamorous for revenge, although they knew not upon whom; the elder were taking measures for the relief of the distressed family. Annaple's cottage, which was situated down the brook, at some distance from the scene of mischief, had been hastily adapted for the temporary accommodation of the old lady and her daughters, with such articles as had been contributed by the neighbours, for very little was saved from the wreck.

"Are we to stand here a' day, sirs," exclaimed one tall young man, "and look at the burnt wa's of our kinsman's house? Every wreath of the reek is a blast of shame upon us! Let us to horse, and take the chase. — Who has the nearest blood-hound?"

"It's young Earnscliff," answered another; "and he's been on and away wi' six horse lang syne, to see if he can track them."

"Let us follow him then, and raise the country, and mak mair help as we ride, and then have at the Cumberland reivers! Take, burn, and slay — they that lie nearest us shall smart first."

"Whisht! haud your tongues, daft callants," said an old man, "ye dinna ken what ye speak about. What! wad ye raise war atween twa pacificated countries?"

"And what signifies deaving us wi' tales about our fathers," retorted the young man, "if we're to sit and see our friends' houses burnt ower their heads, and no put out hand to revenge them? Our fathers did not do that, I trow?"

"I am no saying ony thing against revenging Hobbie's wrang, puir chield; but we maun take the

law wi' us in thae days, Simon," answered the more prudent elder.

"And besides," said another old man, "I dinna believe there's ane now living that kens the lawful mode of following a fray across the Border. Tam o' Whittram kend a' about it; but he died in the hard winter."

"Ay," said a third, "he was at the great gathering, when they chased as far as Thirlwall; it was the year after the fight of Philiphaugh."

"Hout," exclaimed another of these discording counsellors, "there's nae great skill needed; just put a lighted peat on the end of a spear, or hayfork, or siclike, and blaw a horn, and cry the gathering-word, and then it's lawful to follow gear into England, and recover it by the strong hand, or to take gear frae some other Englishman, providing ye lift nae mair than's been lifted frae you. That's the auld Border law, made at Dundrennan, in the days of the Black Douglas (*g*). Deil ane need doubt it. It's as clear as the sun."

"Come away, then, lads," cried Simon, "get to your geldings, and we'll take auld Cuddie the muckle tasker wi' us; he kens the value o' the stock and plenishing that's been lost. Hobbie's stalls and stakes shall be fou again or night; and if we canna big up the auld house sae soon, we'se lay an English ane as low as Heugh-foot is — and that's fair play, a' the warld ower."

This animating proposal was received with great applause by the younger part of the assemblage, when a whisper ran among them, "There's Hobbie himsell, puir fallow! we'll be guided by him."

The principal sufferer, having now reached the bottom of the hill, pushed on through the crowd,

unable, from the tumultuous state of his feelings, to do more than receive and return the grasps of the friendly hands by which his neighbours and kinsmen mutely expressed their sympathy in his misfortune. While he pressed Simon of Hackburn's hand, his anxiety at length found words. "Thank ye, Simon — thank ye, neighbours — I ken what ye wad a' say. But where are they? — Where are" —— He stopped, as if afraid even to name the objects of his enquiry; and with a similar feeling, his kinsmen, without reply, pointed to the hut, into which Hobbie precipitated himself with the desperate air of one who is resolved to know the worst at once. A general and powerful expression of sympathy accompanied him. "Ah, puir fallow — puir Hobbie!"

"He'll learn the warst o't now!"

"But I trust Earnscliff will get some speerings o' the puir lassie."

Such were the exclamations of the group, who, having no acknowledged leader to direct their motions, passively awaited the return of the sufferer, and determined to be guided by his directions.

The meeting between Hobbie and his family was in the highest degree affecting. His sisters threw themselves upon him, and almost stifled him with their caresses, as if to prevent his looking round to distinguish the absence of one yet more beloved.

"God help thee, my son! He can help when worldly trust is a broken reed." — Such was the welcome of the matron to her unfortunate grandson. He looked eagerly round, holding two of his sisters by the hand, while the third hung about his neck— "I see you — I count you — my grandmother, Lilias, Jean, and Annot; but where is ——" (he hesitated, and then continued, as if with an effort,) "Where is

Grace? Surely this is not a time to hide hersell frae me — there's nae time for daffing now."

"O, brother!" and "Our poor Grace!" was the only answer his questions could procure, till his grandmother rose up, and gently disengaged him from the weeping girls, led him to a seat, and with the affecting serenity which sincere piety, like oil sprinkled on the waves, can throw over the most acute feelings, she said, "My bairn, when thy grandfather was killed in the wars, and left me with six orphans around me, with scarce bread to eat, or a roof to cover us, I had strength,— not of mine own — but I had strength given me to say, The Lord's will be done! — My son, our peaceful house was last night broken into by moss-troopers, armed and masked; they have taken and destroyed all, and carried off our dear Grace. Pray for strength to say, His will be done!"

"Mother! mother! urge me not — I cannot — not now — I am a sinful man, and of a hardened race. Masked — armed — Grace carried off! Gie me my sword, and my father's knapsack — I will have vengeance, if I should go to the pit of darkness to seek it!"

"O my bairn, my bairn! be patient under the rod. Who knows when He may lift his hand off from us? Young Earnscliff, Heaven bless him, has taen the chase, with Davie of Stenhouse, and the first comers. I cried to let house and plenishing burn, and follow the reivers to recover Grace, and Earnscliff and his men were ower the Fell within three hours after the deed. God bless him! he's a real Earnscliff; he's his father's true son — a leal friend."

"A true friend indeed; God bless him!" ex-

claimed Hobbie; "let's on and away, and take the chase after him."

"O, my child, before you run on danger, let me hear you but say, His will be done!"

"Urge me not, mother — not now." He was rushing out, when, looking back, he observed his grandmother make a mute attitude of affliction. He returned hastily, threw himself into her arms, and said, "Yes, mother, I *can* say, His will be done, since it will comfort you."

"May He go forth — may He go forth with you, my dear bairn; and O, may He give you cause to say on your return, His name be praised!"

"Farewell, mother! — farewell, my dear sisters!" exclaimed Elliot, and rushed out of the house.

CHAPTER VIII.

> Now horse and hattock, cried the Laird, —
> Now horse and hattock, speedilie;
> They that winna ride for Telfer's kye,
> Let them never look in the face o' me.
>
> *Border Ballad.*

"HORSE! horse! and spear!" exclaimed Hobbie to his kinsmen. Many a ready foot was in the stirrup; and, while Elliot hastily collected arms and accoutrements, no easy matter in such a confusion, the glen resounded with the approbation of his younger friends.

"Ay, ay!" exclaimed Simon of Hackburn, "that's the gate to take it, Hobbie. Let women sit and greet at hame, men must do as they have been done by; it's the Scripture says't."

"Haud your tongue, sir," said one of the seniors, sternly; "dinna abuse the Word that gate, ye dinna ken what ye speak about."

"Hae ye ony tidings? — Hae ye ony speerings, Hobbie? — O, callants, dinna be ower hasty," said old Dick of the Dingle.

"What signifies preaching to us, e'enow?" said Simon; "if ye canna make help yoursell, dinna keep back them that can."

"Whisht, sir; wad ye take vengeance or ye ken wha has wrang'd ye?"

"D'ye think we dinna ken the road to England as weel as our fathers before us? — All evil comes

out o' thereaway — it's an auld saying and a true; and we'll e'en away there, as if the devil was blawing us south."

"We'll follow the track o' Earnscliff's horses ower the waste," cried one Elliot.

"I'll prick them out through the blindest moor in the Border, an there had been a fair held there the day before," said Hugh, the blacksmith of Ringleburn, "for I aye shoe his horse wi' my ain hand."

"Lay on the deer-hounds," cried another; "where are they?"

"Hout, man, the sun's been lang up, and the dew is aff the grund — the scent will never lie."

Hobbie instantly whistled on his hounds, which were roving about the ruins of their old habitation, and filling the air with their doleful howls.

"Now, Killbuck," said Hobbie, "try thy skill this day" — and then, as if a light had suddenly broke on him, — "that ill-faur'd goblin spak something o' this! He may ken mair o't, either by villains on earth, or devils below — I'll hae it frae him, if I should cut it out o' his mis-shapen bouk wi' my whinger." He then hastily gave directions to his comrades: "Four o' ye, wi' Simon, hand right forward to Græmes'-gap. If they're English, they'll be for being back that way. The rest disperse by twasome and threesome through the waste, and meet me at the Trysting-pool. Tell my brothers, when they come up, to follow and meet us there. Poor lads, they will hae hearts weelnigh as sair as mine; little think they what a sorrowful house they are bringing their venison to! I'll ride ower Mucklestane-Moor mysell."

"And if I were you," said Dick of the Dingle, "I

would speak to Canny Elshie. He can tell you whatever betides in this land, if he's sae minded."

"He *shall* tell me," said Hobbie, who was busy putting his arms in order, "what he kens o' this night's job, or I shall right weel ken wherefore he does not."

"Ay, but speak him fair, my bonny man — speak him fair, Hobbie; the like o' him will no bear thrawing. They converse sae muckle wi' thae fractious ghaists and evil spirits, that it clean spoils their temper."

"Let me alane to guide him," answered Hobbie; "there's that in my breast this day, that would ower-maister a' the warlocks on earth, and a' the devils in hell."

And being now fully equipped, he threw himself on his horse, and spurred him at a rapid pace against the steep ascent.

Elliot speedily surmounted the hill, rode down the other side at the same rate, crossed a wood, and traversed a long glen, ere he at length regained Mucklestane-Moor. As he was obliged, in the course of his journey, to relax his speed in consideration of the labour which his horse might still have to undergo, he had time to consider maturely in what manner he should address the Dwarf, in order to extract from him the knowledge which he supposed him to be in possession of concerning the authors of his misfortunes. Hobbie, though blunt, plain of speech, and hot of disposition, like most of his countrymen, was by no means deficient in the shrewdness which is also their characteristic. He reflected, that from what he had observed on the memorable night when the Dwarf was first seen, and from the conduct of that mysterious being ever

since, he was likely to be rendered even more obstinate in his sullenness by threats and violence.

"I'll speak him fair," he said, "as auld Dickon advised me. Though folk say he has a league wi' Satan, he canna be sic an incarnate devil as no to take some pity in a case like mine; and folk threep he'll whiles do good, charitable sort o' things. I'll keep my heart doun as weel as I can, and stroke him wi' the hair; and if the warst come to the warst, it's but wringing the head o' him about at last."

In this disposition of accommodation he approached the hut of the Solitary.

The old man was not upon his seat of audience, nor could Hobbie perceive him in his garden, or enclosures.

"He's gotten into his very keep," said Hobbie, "maybe to be out o' the gate; but I'se pu' it doun about his lugs, if I canna win at him otherwise."

Having thus communed with himself, he raised his voice, and invoked Elshie in a tone as supplicating as his conflicting feelings would permit. "Elshie, my gude friend!" No reply. "Elshie, canny Father Elshie!" The Dwarf remained mute. "Sorrow be in the crooked carcass of thee!" said the Borderer between his teeth; and then again attempting a soothing tone, — "Good Father Elshie, a most miserable creature desires some counsel of your wisdom."

"The better!" answered the shrill and discordant voice of the Dwarf through a very small window, resembling an arrow-slit, which he had constructed near the door of his dwelling, and through which he could see any one who approached it, without the possibility of their looking in upon him.

"The better!" said Hobbie impatiently; "what is the better, Elshie? Do you not hear me tell you I am the most miserable wretch living?"

"And do you not hear me tell you it is so much the better? and did I not tell you this morning, when you thought yourself so happy, what an evening was coming upon you?"

"That ye did e'en," replied Hobbie, "and that gars me come to you for advice now; they that foresaw the trouble maun ken the cure."

"I know no cure for earthly trouble," returned the Dwarf; "or, if I did, why should I help others, when none hath aided me? Have I not lost wealth, that would have bought all thy barren hills a hundred times over? rank, to which thine is as that of a peasant? society, where there was an interchange of all that was amiable — of all that was intellectual? Have I not lost all this? Am I not residing here, the veriest outcast on the face of Nature, in the most hideous and most solitary of her retreats, myself more hideous than all that is around me? And why should other worms complain to me when they are trodden on, since I am myself lying crushed and writhing under the chariot-wheel?"

"Ye may have lost all this," answered Hobbie, in the bitterness of emotion; "land and friends, goods and gear; ye may hae lost them a', — but ye ne'er can hae sae sair a heart as mine, for ye ne'er lost nae Grace Armstrong. And now my last hopes are gane, and I shall ne'er see her mair."

This he said in the tone of deepest emotion — and there followed a long pause, for the mention of his bride's name had overcome the more angry and irritable feelings of poor Hobbie. Ere he had again

addressed the Solitary, the bony hand and long fingers of the latter, holding a large leathern bag, was thrust forth at the small window, and as it unclutched the burden, and let it drop with a clang upon the ground, his harsh voice again addressed Elliot.

"There — there lies a salve for every human ill; so, at least, each human wretch readily thinks. — Begone; return twice as wealthy as thou wert before yesterday, and torment me no more with questions, complaints, or thanks; they are alike odious to me."

"It is a' gowd, by Heaven!" said Elliot, having glanced at the contents; and then again addressing the Hermit, "Muckle obliged for your goodwill; and I wad blithely gie you a bond for some o' the siller, or a wadset ower the lands o' Wide-open. But I dinna ken, Elshie; to be free wi' you, I dinna like to use siller unless I kend it was decently come by; and maybe it might turn into sclate-stanes, and cheat some poor man."

"Ignorant idiot!" retorted the Dwarf; "the trash is as genuine poison as ever was dug out of the bowels of the earth. Take it — use it, and may it thrive with you as it hath done with me!"

"But I tell you," said Elliot, "it wasna about the gear that I was consulting you, — it was a braw barn-yard, doubtless, and thirty head of finer cattle there werena on this side of the Cat-rail; (*h*) but let the gear gang, — if ye could but gie me speerings o' puir Grace, I would be content to be your slave for life, in ony thing that didna touch my salvation. O, Elshie, speak, man, speak!"

"Well, then," answered the Dwarf, as if worn out by his importunity, "since thou hast not enough

of woes of thine own, but must needs seek to burden thyself with those of a partner, seek her whom thou hast lost in the *West*."

"In the *West?* That's a wide word."

"It is the last," said the Dwarf, "which I design to utter;" and he drew the shutters of his window, leaving Hobbie to make the most of the hint he had given.

The west! the west! — thought Elliot; the country is pretty quiet down that way, unless it were Jock o' the Todholes; and he's ower auld now for the like o' thae jobs. — West! — By my life, it must be Westburnflat. "Elshie, just tell me one word. Am I right? Is it Westburnflat? If I am wrang, say sae. I wadna like to wyte an innocent neighbour wi' violence — No answer? — It must be the Red Reiver — I didna think he wad hae ventured on me, neither, and sae mony kin as there's o' us — I am thinking he'll hae some better backing than his Cumberland friends. — Fareweel to you, Elshie, and mony thanks — I downa be fashed wi' the siller e'en now, for I maun awa' to meet my friends at the Trysting-place — Sae, if ye carena to open the window, ye can fetch it in after I'm awa'."

Still there was no reply.

"He's deaf, or he's daft, or he's baith; but I hae nae time to stay to claver wi' him."

And off rode Hobbie Elliot towards the place of rendezvous which he had named to his friends.

Four or five riders were already gathered at the Trysting-pool. They stood in close consultation together, while their horses were permitted to graze among the poplars which overhung the broad still pool. A more numerous party were seen coming from the southward. It proved to be Earnscliff and

his party, who had followed the track of the cattle as far as the English border, but had halted on the information that a considerable force was drawn together under some of the jacobite gentlemen in that district, and there were tidings of insurrection in different parts of Scotland. This took away from the act which had been perpetrated the appearance of private animosity, or love of plunder; and Earnscliff was now disposed to regard it as a symptom of civil war. The young gentleman greeted Hobbie with the most sincere sympathy, and informed him of the news he had received.

"Then, may I never stir frae the bit," said Elliot, "if auld Ellieslaw is not at the bottom o' the haill villainy! Ye see he's leagued wi' the Cumberland Catholics; and that agrees weel wi' what Elshie hinted about Westburnflat, for Ellieslaw aye protected him, and he will want to harry and disarm the country about his ain hand before he breaks out."

Some now remembered that the party of ruffians had been heard to say they were acting for James VIII., and were charged to disarm all rebels. Others had heard Westburnflat boast, in drinking parties, that Ellieslaw would soon be in arms for the Jacobite cause, and that he himself was to hold a command under him, and that they would be bad neighbours for young Earnscliff, and all that stood out for the established government. The result was a strong belief that Westburnflat had headed the party under Ellieslaw's orders; and they resolved to proceed instantly to the house of the former, and, if possible, to secure his person. They were by this time joined by so many of their dispersed friends, that their number amounted to upwards of twenty horsemen, well mounted, and tolerably, though variously, armed.

A brook, which issued from a narrow glen among the hills, entered, at Westburnflat, upon the open marshy level, which, expanding about half a mile in every direction, gives name to the spot. In this place the character of the stream becomes changed, and, from being a lively brisk-running mountain-torrent, it stagnates, like a blue swollen snake, in dull deep windings, through the swampy level. On the side of the stream, and nearly about the centre of the plain, arose the tower of Westburnflat, one of the few remaining strongholds formerly so numerous upon the Borders. The ground upon which it stood was gently elevated above the marsh for the space of about a hundred yards, affording an esplanade of dry turf, which extended itself in the immediate neighbourhood of the tower; but, beyond which, the surface presented to strangers was that of an impassable and dangerous bog. The owner of the tower and his inmates alone knew the winding and intricate paths, which, leading over ground that was comparatively sound, admitted visitors to his residence. But among the party which were assembled under Earnscliff's directions, there was more than one person qualified to act as a guide. For although the owner's character and habits of life were generally known, yet the laxity of feeling with respect to property prevented his being looked on with the abhorrence with which he must have been regarded in a more civilized country. He was considered, among his more peaceable neighbours, pretty much as a gambler, cock-fighter, or horse-jockey, would be regarded at the present day; a person, of course, whose habits were to be condemned, and his society, in general, avoided, yet who could not be considered as marked with the indelible infamy attached to his

profession, where laws have been habitually observed. And their indignation was awakened against him upon this occasion, not so much on account of the general nature of the transaction, which was just such as was to be expected from this marauder, as that the violence had been perpetrated upon a neighbour against whom he had no cause of quarrel, — against a friend of their own, — above all, against one of the name of Elliot, to which clan most of them belonged. It was not, therefore, wonderful, that there should be several in the band pretty well acquainted with the locality of his habitation, and capable of giving such directions and guidance as soon placed the whole party on the open space of firm ground in front of the Tower of Westburnflat.

CHAPTER IX.

So spak the knicht; the geaunt sed,
Lead forth with the, the sely maid,
And mak me quite of the and sche;
For glaunsing ee, or brow so brent,
Or cheek with rose and lilye blent,
Me lists not ficht with the.

Romance of the Falcon.

THE tower, before which the party now stood, was a small square building, of the most gloomy aspect. The walls were of great thickness, and the windows, or slits which served the purpose of windows, seemed rather calculated to afford the defenders the means of employing missile weapons, than for admitting air or light to the apartments within. A small battlement projected over the walls on every side, and afforded farther advantage of defence by its niched parapet, within which arose a steep roof, flagged with grey stones. A single turret at one angle, defended by a door studded with huge iron nails, rose above the battlement, and gave access to the roof from within, by the spiral staircase which it enclosed. It seemed to the party that their motions were watched by some one concealed within this turret; and they were confirmed in their belief, when, through a narrow loophole, a female hand was seen to wave a handkerchief, as if by way of signal to them. Hobbie was almost out of his senses with joy and eagerness.

"It was Grace's hand and arm," he said; "I can swear to it amang a thousand. There is not the like

of it on this side of the Lowdens — We'll have her out, lads, if we should carry off the Tower of Westburnflat stane by stane."

Earnscliff, though he doubted the possibility of recognising a fair maiden's hand at such a distance from the eye of the lover, would say nothing to damp his friend's animated hopes, and it was resolved to summon the garrison.

The shouts of the party, and the winding of one or two horns, at length brought to a loophole, which flanked the entrance, the haggard face of an old woman.

"That's the Reiver's mother," said one of the Elliots; "she's ten times waur than himsell, and is wyted for muckle of the ill he does about the country."

"Wha are ye? What d'ye want here?" were the queries of the respectable progenitor.

"We are seeking William Græme of Westburnflat," said Earnscliff.

"He's no at hame," returned the old dame.

"When did he leave home?" pursued Earnscliff.

"I canna tell," said the portress.

"When will he return?" said Hobbie Elliot.

"I dinna ken naething about it," replied the inexorable guardian of the keep.

"Is there any body within the tower with you?" again demanded Earnscliff.

"Naebody but mysell and baudrons," said the old woman.

"Then open the gate and admit us," said Earnscliff; "I am a justice of peace, and in search of the evidence of a felony."

"Deil be in their fingers that draws a bolt for ye," retorted the portress; "for mine shall never

do it. Thinkna ye shame o' yoursells, to come here siccan a band o' ye, wi' your swords, and spears, and steel-caps, to frighten a lone widow woman?"

"Our information," said Earnscliff, "is positive; we are seeking goods which have been forcibly carried off, to a great amount."

"And a young woman, that's been cruelly made prisoner, that's worth mair than a' the gear, twice told," said Hobbie.

"And I warn you," continued Earnscliff, "that your only way to prove your son's innocence is to give us quiet admittance to search the house."

"And what will ye do, if I carena to thraw the keys, or draw the bolts, or open the grate to sic a clamjamfrie?" said the old dame, scoffingly.

"Force our way with the king's keys, and break the neck of every living soul we find in the house, if ye dinna gie it ower forthwith!" menaced the incensed Hobbie.

"Threatened folks live lang," said the hag, in the same tone of irony; "there's the iron grate — try your skeel on't, lads — it has kept out as gude men as you, or now."

So saying, she laughed, and withdrew from the aperture through which she had held the parley.

The besiegers now opened a serious consultation. The immense thickness of the walls, and the small size of the windows, might, for a time, have even resisted cannon-shot. The entrance was secured, first by a strong grated door, composed entirely of hammered iron, of such ponderous strength as seemed calculated to resist any force that could be brought against it. "Pinches or forehammers will never pick upon't," said Hugh, the blacksmith of Ringleburn; "ye might as weel batter at it wi' pipe-staples."

Within the doorway, and at the distance of nine feet, which was the solid thickness of the wall, there was a second door of oak, crossed, both breadth and lengthways, with clenched bars of iron, and studded full of broad-headed nails. Besides all these defences, they were by no means confident in the truth of the old dame's assertion, that she alone composed the garrison. The more knowing of the party had observed hoof-marks in the track by which they approached the tower, which seemed to indicate that several persons had very lately passed in that direction.

To all these difficulties was added their want of means for attacking the place. There was no hope of procuring ladders long enough to reach the battlements, and the windows, besides being very narrow, were secured with iron bars. Scaling was therefore out of the question; mining was still more so, for want of tools and gunpowder; neither were the besiegers provided with food, means of shelter, or other conveniences, which might have enabled them to convert the siege into a blockade; and there would, at any rate, have been a risk of relief from some of the marauder's comrades. Hobbie grinded and gnashed his teeth, as, walking round the fastness, he could devise no means of making a forcible entry. At length he suddenly exclaimed, "And what for no do as our fathers did lang syne? —Put hand to the wark, lads. Let us cut up bushes and briers, pile them before the door and set fire to them, and smoke that auld devil's dam as if she were to be reested for bacon."

All immediately closed with this proposal, and some went to work with swords and knives to cut down the alder and hawthorn bushes which grew

by the side of the sluggish stream, many of which were sufficiently decayed and dried for their purpose, while others began to collect them in a large stack, properly disposed for burning, as close to the iron-grate as they could be piled. Fire was speedily obtained from one of their guns, and Hobbie was already advancing to the pile with a kindled brand, when the surly face of the robber, and the muzzle of a musquetoon, were partially shown at a shot-hole which flanked the entrance. "Mony thanks to ye," he said, scoffingly, "for collecting sae muckle winter eilding for us; but if ye step a foot nearer it wi' that lunt, it's be the dearest step ye ever made in your days."

"We'll sune see that," said Hobbie, advancing fearlessly with the torch.

The marauder snapped his piece at him, which, fortunately for our honest friend, did not go off; while Earnscliff, firing at the same moment at the narrow aperture and slight mark afforded by the robber's face, grazed the side of his head with a bullet. He had apparently calculated upon his post affording him more security, for he no sooner felt the wound, though a very slight one, than he requested a parley, and demanded to know what they meant by attacking in this fashion a peaceable and honest man, and shedding his blood in that lawless manner?

"We want your prisoner," said Earnscliff, "to be delivered up to us in safety."

"And what concern have you with her?" replied the marauder.

"That," retorted Earnscliff, "you, who are detaining her by force, have no right to enquire."

"Aweel, I think I can gie a guess," said the rob-

ber. "Weel, sirs, I am laith to enter into deadly feud with you by spilling ony of your bluid, though Earnscliff hasna stopped to shed mine — and he can hit a mark to a groat's breadth — so, to prevent mair skaith, I am willing to deliver up the prisoner, since nae less will please you."

"And Hobbie's gear?" cried Simon of Hackburn. "D'ye think you're to be free to plunder the faulds and byres of a gentle Elliot, as if they were an auld wife's hen's-cavey?"

"As I live by bread," replied Willie of Westburnflat — "As I live by bread, I have not a single cloot o' them! They're a' ower the march lang syne; there's no a horn o' them about the tower. But I'll see what o' them can be gotten back, and I'll take this day twa days to meet Hobbie at the Castleton wi' twa friends on ilka side, and see to make an agreement about a' the wrang he can wyte me wi'."

"Ay, ay," said Elliot, "that will do weel eneugh." — And then aside to his kinsman, "Murrain on the gear! Lordsake, man! say nought about them. Let us but get puir Grace out o' that auld hellicat's clutches."

"Will ye gie me your word, Earnscliff," said the marauder, who still lingered at the shot-hole, "your faith and troth, with hand and glove, that I am free to come and free to gae, with five minutes to open the grate, and five minutes to steek it and to draw the bolts? less winna do, for they want creishing sairly. Will ye do this?"

"You shall have full time," said Earnscliff; "I plight my faith and troth, my hand and my glove."

"Wait there a moment, then," said Westburnflat; "or hear ye, I wad rather ye wad fa' back a

pistol-shot from the door. It's no that I mistrust your word, Earnscliff; but it's best to be sure."

O, friend, thought Hobbie to himself, as he drew back, an I had you but on Turner's-holm,[1] and naebody by but twa honest lads to see fair play, I wad make ye wish ye had broken your leg ere ye had touched beast or body that belanged to me!

"He has a white feather in his wing this same Westburnflat, after a'," said Simon of Hackburn, somewhat scandalized by his ready surrender.—"He'll ne'er fill his father's boots."

In the meanwhile, the inner door of the tower was opened, and the mother of the freebooter appeared in the space betwixt that and the outer grate. Willie himself was next seen, leading forth a female, and the old woman, carefully bolting the grate behind them, remained on the post as a sort of sentinel.

"Ony ane or twa o' ye come forward," said the outlaw, "and take her frae my hand haill and sound."

Hobbie advanced eagerly, to meet his betrothed bride. Earnscliff followed more slowly, to guard against treachery. Suddenly Hobbie slackened his pace in the deepest mortification, while that of Earnscliff was hastened by impatient surprise. It was not Grace Armstrong, but Miss Isabella Vere, whose liberation had been affected by their appearance before the tower.

"Where is Grace? where is Grace Armstrong?"

[1] There is a level meadow, on the very margin of the two kingdoms, called Turner's-holm, just where the brook called Crissop joins the Liddel. It is said to have derived its name as being a place frequently assigned for tourneys, during the ancient Border times.

exclaimed Hobbie, in the extremity of wrath and indignation.

"Not in my hands," answered Westburnflat; "ye may search the tower, if ye misdoubt me."

"You false villain, you shall account for her, or die on the spot," said Elliot, presenting his gun.

But his companions, who now came up, instantly disarmed him of his weapon, exclaiming, all at once, "Hand and glove! faith and troth! Haud a care, Hobbie; we maun keep our faith wi' Westburnflat, were he the greatest rogue ever rode."

Thus protected, the outlaw recovered his audacity, which had been somewhat daunted by the menacing gesture of Elliot.

"I have kept my word, sirs," he said, "and I look to have nae wrang amang ye. If this is no the prisoner ye sought," he said, addressing Earnscliff, "ye'll render her back to me again. I am answerable for her to those that aught her."

"For God's sake, Mr. Earnscliff, protect me!" said Miss Vere, clinging to her deliverer; "do not you abandon one whom the whole world seems to have abandoned."

"Fear nothing," whispered Earnscliff, "I will protect you with my life." Then turning to Westburnflat, "Villain!" he said, "how dared you to insult this lady?"

"For that matter, Earnscliff," answered the freebooter, "I can answer to them that has better right to ask me than you have; but if *you* come with an armed force, and take her awa' from them that her friends lodged her wi', how will you answer *that?* — But it's your ain affair — Nae single man can keep a tower against twenty — A' the men o' the Mearns downa do mair than they dow."

"He lies most falsely," said Isabella; "he carried me off by violence from my father."

"Maybe he only wanted ye to think sae, hinny," replied the robber; "but it's nae business o' mine, let it be as it may.—So ye winna resign her back to me?"

"Back to you, fellow? Surely no," answered Earnscliff; "I will protect Miss Vere, and escort her safely wherever she is pleased to be conveyed."

"Ay, ay, maybe you and her hae settled that already," said Willie of Westburnflat.

"And Grace?" interrupted Hobbie, shaking himself loose from the friends who had been preaching to him the sanctity of the safe conduct, upon the faith of which the freebooter had ventured from his tower,—"Where's Grace?" and he rushed on the marauder, sword in hand.

Westburnflat, thus pressed, after calling out "Godsake, Hobbie, hear me a gliff!" fairly turned his back and fled. His mother stood ready to open and shut the grate; but Hobbie struck at the freebooter as he entered with so much force, that the sword made a considerable cleft in the lintel of the vaulted door, which is still shown as a memorial of the superior strength of those who lived in the days of yore. Ere Hobbie could repeat the blow, the door was shut and secured, and he was compelled to retreat to his companions, who were now preparing to break up the siege of Westburnflat. They insisted upon his accompanying them in their return.

"Ye hae broken truce already," said old Dick of the Dingle; "an we takena the better care, ye'll play mair gowk's tricks, and make yoursell the laughing-stock of the haill country, besides having

your friends charged with slaughter under trust. Bide till the meeting at Castleton, as ye hae greed; and if he disna make ye amends, then we'll hae it out o' his heart's blood. But let us gang reasonably to wark and keep our tryst, and I'se warrant we get back Grace, and the kye an' a'."

This cold-blooded reasoning went ill down with the unfortunate lover; but, as he could only obtain the assistance of his neighbours and kinsmen on their own terms, he was compelled to acquiesce in their notions of good faith and regular procedure.

Earnscliff now requested the assistance of a few of the party to convey Miss Vere to her father's castle of Ellieslaw, to which she was peremptory in desiring to be conducted. This was readily granted; and five or six young men agreed to attend him as an escort. Hobbie was not of the number. Almost heart-broken by the events of the day, and his final disappointment, he returned moodily home to take such measures as he could for the sustenance and protection of his family, and to arrange with his neighbours the farther steps which should be adopted for the recovery of Grace Armstrong. The rest of the party dispersed in different directions, as soon as they had crossed the morass. The outlaw and his mother watched them from the tower, until they entirely disappeared.

CHAPTER X.

I left my ladye's bower last night —
It was clad in wreaths of snaw, —
I'll seek it when the sun is bright,
And sweet the roses blaw.

Old Ballad.

INCENSED at what he deemed the coldness of his friends, in a cause which interested him so nearly, Hobbie had shaken himself free of their company, and was now on his solitary road homeward. "The fiend founder thee!" said he, as he spurred impatiently his over-fatigued and stumbling horse; "thou art like a' the rest o' them. Hae I not bred thee, and fed thee, and dressed thee wi' mine ain hand, and wouldst thou snapper now and break my neck at my utmost need? But thou'rt e'en like the lave — the farthest off o' them a' is my cousin ten times removed, and day or night I wad hae served them wi' my best blood; and now, I think they show mair regard to the common thief of Westburnflat than to their ain kinsman. But I should see the lights now in Heugh-foot — Wae's me!" he continued, recollecting himself, "there will neither coal nor candle-light shine in the Heugh-foot ony mair! An it werena for my mother and sisters, and poor Grace, I could find in my heart to put spurs to the beast, and loup ower the scaur into the water to make an end o't a'." — In this disconsolate mood he turned his horse's bridle towards the cottage in which his family had found refuge.

As he approached the door, he heard whispering and tittering amongst his sisters. "The deevil's in the women," said poor Hobbie; "they would nicker, and laugh, and giggle, if their best friend was lying a corp — and yet I am glad they can keep up their hearts sae weel, poor silly things; but the dirdum fa's on me, to be sure, and no on them."

While he thus meditated, he was engaged in fastening up his horse in a shed. "Thou maun do without horse-sheet and surcingle now, lad," he said, addressing the animal; "you and me hae had a downcome alike; we had better hae fa'en in the deepest pool o' Tarras."

He was interrupted by the youngest of his sisters, who came running out, and, speaking in a constrained voice, as if to stifle some emotion, called out to him, "What are ye doing there, Hobbie, fiddling about the naig, and there's ane frae Cumberland been waiting here for ye this hour and mair? Haste ye in, man; I'll take off the saddle."

"Ane frae Cumberland!" exclaimed Elliot; and putting the bridle of his horse into the hand of his sister, he rushed into the cottage. "Where is he? where is he?" he exclaimed, glancing eagerly around, and seeing only females; "Did he bring news of Grace?"

"He doughtna bide an instant langer," said the elder sister, still with a suppressed laugh.

"Hout fie, bairns!" said the old lady, with something of a good-humoured reproof, "ye shouldna vex your billy Hobbie that way. — Look round, my bairn, and see if there isna ane here mair than ye left this morning."

Hobbie looked eagerly round. "There's you, and the three titties."

"There's four of us now, Hobbie, lad," said the youngest, who at this moment entered.

In an instant Hobbie had in his arms Grace Armstrong, who, with one of his sisters' plaids around her, had passed unnoticed at his first entrance. "How dared you do this?" said Hobbie.

"It wasna my fault," said Grace, endeavouring to cover her face with her hands to hide at once her blushes, and escape the storm of hearty kisses with which her bridegroom punished her simple stratagem, — "It wasna my fault, Hobbie; ye should kiss Jeanie and the rest o' them, for they hae the wyte o't."

"And so I will," said Hobbie, and embraced and kissed his sisters and grandmother a hundred times, while the whole party half-laughed, half-cried, in the extremity of their joy. "I am the happiest man," said Hobbie, throwing himself down on a seat, almost exhausted, — "I am the happiest man in the world!"

"Then, O my dear bairn," said the good old dame, who lost no opportunity of teaching her lesson of religion at those moments when the heart was best open to receive it, — "Then, O my son, give praise to Him that brings smiles out o' tears and joy out o' grief, as he brought light out o' darkness and the world out o' naething. Was it not my word, that if ye could say His will be done, ye might hae cause to say His name be praised?"

"It was — it was your word, grannie; and I do praise Him for His mercy, and for leaving me a good parent when my ain were gane," said honest Hobbie, taking her hand, "that puts me in mind to think of Him, baith in happiness and distress."

There was a solemn pause of one or two minutes

employed in the exercise of mental devotion, which expressed, in purity and sincerity, the gratitude of the affectionate family to that Providence who had unexpectedly restored to their embraces the friend whom they had lost.

Hobbie's first enquiries were concerning the adventures which Grace had undergone. They were told at length, but amounted in substance to this: —That she was awaked by the noise which the ruffians made in breaking into the house, and by the resistance made by one or two of the servants, which was soon overpowered; that, dressing herself hastily, she ran down stairs, and having seen, in the scuffle, Westburnflat's vizard drop off, imprudently named him by his name, and besought him for mercy; that the ruffian instantly stopped her mouth, dragged her from the house, and placed her on horseback, behind one of his associates.

"I'll break the accursed neck of him," said Hobbie, "if there werena another Græme in the land but himsell!"

She proceeded to say, that she was carried southward along with the party, and the spoil which they drove before them, until they had crossed the Border. Suddenly a person, known to her as a kinsman of Westburnflat, came riding very fast after the marauders, and told their leader, that his cousin had learnt from a sure hand that no luck would come of it, unless the lass was restored to her friends. After some discussion, the chief of the party seemed to acquiesce. Grace was placed behind her new guardian, who pursued in silence, and with great speed, the least-frequented path to the Heugh-foot, and ere evening closed, set down the fatigued and terrified damsel within a quarter

of a mile of the dwelling of her friends. Many and sincere were the congratulations which passed on all sides.

As these emotions subsided, less pleasing considerations began to intrude themselves.

"This is a miserable place for ye a'," said Hobbie, looking around him; "I can sleep weel eneugh mysell outby beside the naig, as I hae done mony a lang night on the hills; but how ye are to put yoursells up, I canna see! And what's waur, I canna mend it; and what's waur than a', the morn may come, and the day after that, without your being a bit better off."

"It was a cowardly cruel thing," said one of the sisters, looking round, "to harry a puir family to the bare wa's this gate."

"And leave us neither stirk nor stot," said the youngest brother, who now entered, "nor sheep nor lamb, nor aught that eats grass and corn."

"If they had ony quarrel wi' us," said Harry, the second brother, "were we na ready to have fought it out? And that we should have been a' frae hame, too, — ane and a' upon the hill — Odd, an we had been at hame, Will Græme's stamach shouldna hae wanted its morning; but it's biding him, is it na, Hobbie?"

"Our neighbours hae taen a day at the Castleton to gree wi' him at the sight o' men," said Hobbie, mournfully; "they behove to have it a' their ain gate, or there was nae help to be got at their hands."

"To gree wi' him!" exclaimed both his brothers at once, "after siccan an act of stouthrife as hasna been heard o' in the country since the auld riding days!"

"Very true, billies, and my blood was e'en boil-

ing at it; but —— the sight o' Grace Armstrong has settled it brawly."

"But the stocking, Hobbie?" said John Elliot; "we're utterly ruined. Harry and I hae been to gather what was on the outby land, and there's scarce a cloot left. I kenna how we're to carry on — We maun a' gang to the wars, I think. Westburnflat hasna the means, e'en if he had the will, to make up our loss; there's nae mends to be got out o' him, but what ye take out o' his banes. He hasna a four-footed creature but the vicious blood thing he rides on, and that's sair trash'd wi' his night wark. We are ruined stoop and roop."

Hobbie cast a mournful glance on Grace Armstrong, who returned it with a downcast look and a gentle sigh.

"Dinna be cast down, bairns," said the grandmother, "we hae gude friends that winna forsake us in adversity. There's Sir Thomas Kittleloof is my third cousin by the mother's side, and he has come by a hantle siller, and been made a knight-baronet into the bargain, for being ane o' the commissioners at the Union."

"He wadna gie a bodle to save us frae famishing," said Hobbie; "and, if he did, the bread that I bought wi't would stick in my throat, when I thought it was part of the price of puir auld Scotland's crown and independence."

"There's the Laird o' Dunder, ane o' the auldest families in Tiviotdale."

"He's in the tolbooth, mother — he's in the Heart of Mid-Louden for a thousand merk he borrowed from Saunders Wyliecoat, the writer."

"Poor man!" exclaimed Mrs. Elliot, "can we no send him something, Hobbie?"

"Ye forget, grannie, ye forget we want help oursells," said Hobbie, somewhat peevishly.

"Troth did I, hinny," replied the good-natured lady, "just at the instant; it's sae natural to think on ane's blude relations before themsells. — But there's young Earnscliff."

"He has ower little o' his ain; and siccan a name to keep up, it wad be a shame," said Hobbie, "to burden him wi' our distress. And I'll tell ye, grannie, it's needless to sit rhyming ower the style of a' your kith, kin, and allies, as if there was a charm in their braw names to do us good; the grandees hae forgotten us, and those of our ain degree hae just little eneugh to gang on wi' themsells; ne'er a friend hae we that can, or will, help us to stock the farm again."

"Then, Hobbie, we maun trust in Him that can raise up friends and fortune out o' the bare moor, as they say."

Hobbie sprung upon his feet. "Ye are right, grannie!" he exclaimed; "ye are right. I do ken a friend on the bare moor, that baith can and will help us — The turns o' this day hae dung my head clean hirdie-girdie. I left as muckle gowd lying on Mucklestane-Moor this morning as would plenish the house and stock the Heugh-foot twice ower, and I am certain sure Elshie wadna grudge us the use of it."

"Elshie!" said his grandmother in astonishment; "what Elshie do you mean?"

"What Elshie should I mean, but Canny Elshie, the Wight o' Mucklestane," replied Hobbie.

"God forfend, my bairn, you should gang to fetch water out o' broken cisterns, or seek for relief frae them that deal wi' the Evil One! There

was never luck in their gifts, nor grace in their paths. And the haill country kens that body Elshie's an unco man. O, if there was the law, and the douce quiet administration of justice, that makes a kingdom flourish in righteousness, the like o' them suldna be suffered to live! The wizard and the witch are the abomination and the evil thing in the land."

"Troth, mother," answered Hobbie, "ye may say what ye like, but I am in the mind that witches and warlocks havena half the power they had lang syne; at least, sure am I, that ae ill-deviser, like auld Ellieslaw, or ae ill-doer, like that d—d villain Westburnflat, is a greater plague and abomination in a country-side than a haill curnie o' the warst witches that ever capered on a broomstick, or played cantrips on Fastern's E'en. It wad hae been lang or Elshie had burnt down my house and barns, and I am determined to try if he will do aught to build them up again. He's weel kend a skilfu' man ower a' the country, as far as Brough under Stanmore."

"Bide a wee, my bairn; mind his benefits havena thriven wi' a'body. Jock Howden died o' the very same disorder Elshie pretended to cure him of, about the fa' o' the leaf; and though he helped Lambside's cow weel out o' the moor-ill, yet the louping-ill's been sairer amang his sheep than ony season before. And then I have heard he uses sic words abusing human nature, that's like a fleeing in the face of Providence; and ye mind ye said yoursell, the first time ye ever saw him, that he was mair like a bogle than a living thing."

"Hout, mother," said Hobbie, "Elshie's no that bad a chield; he's a grewsome spectacle for a crooked

disciple, to be sure, and a rough talker, but his bark is waur than his bite; sae, if I had anes something to eat, for I havena had a morsel ower my throat this day, I wad streek mysell down for twa or three hours aside the beast, and be on and awa' to Mucklestane wi' the first skreigh o' morning."

"And what for no the night, Hobbie," said Harry, "and I will ride wi' ye?"

"My naig is tired," said Hobbie.

"Ye may take mine, then," said John.

"But I am a wee thing wearied mysell."

"You wearied?" said Harry; "shame on ye! I have kend ye keep the saddle four-and-twenty hours thegither, and ne'er sic a word as weariness in your wame."

"The night's very dark," said Hobbie, rising and looking through the casement of the cottage; "and, to speak truth, and shame the deil, though Elshie's a real honest fallow, yet somegate I would rather take daylight wi' me when I gang to visit him."

This frank avowal put a stop to further argument; and Hobbie, having thus compromised matters between the rashness of his brother's counsel, and the timid cautions which he received from his grandmother, refreshed himself with such food as the cottage afforded; and, after a cordial salutation all round, retired to the shed, and stretched himself beside his trusty palfrey. His brothers shared between them some trusses of clean straw, disposed in the stall usually occupied by old Annaple's cow; and the females arranged themselves for repose as well as the accommodations of the cottage would permit.

With the first dawn of morning, Hobbie arose;

and, having rubbed down and saddled his horse, he set forth to Mucklestane-Moor. He avoided the company of either of his brothers, from an idea that the Dwarf was most propitious to those who visited him alone.

"The creature," said he to himself, as he went along, "is no neighbourly; ae body at a time is fully mair than he weel can abide. I wonder if he's looked out o' the crib o' him to gather up the bag o' siller. If he hasna done that, it will hae been a braw winfa' for somebody, and I'll be finely flung. — Come, Tarras," said he to his horse, striking him at the same time with his spur, "make mair fit, man; we maun be first on the field if we can."

He was now on the heath, which began to be illuminated by the beams of the rising sun; the gentle declivity which he was descending presented him a distinct, though distant view, of the Dwarf's dwelling. The door opened, and Hobbie witnessed with his own eyes that phenomenon which he had frequently heard mentioned. Two human figures (if that of the Dwarf could be termed such) issued from the solitary abode of the Recluse, and stood as if in converse together in the open air. The taller form then stooped, as if taking something up which lay beside the door of the hut, then both moved forward a little way, and again halted, as in deep conference. All Hobbie's superstitious terrors revived on witnessing this spectacle. That the Dwarf would open his dwelling to a mortal guest, was as improbable as that any one would choose voluntarily to be his nocturnal visitor; and, under full conviction that he beheld a wizard holding intercourse with his familiar spirit, Hobbie pulled in at once his breath and his bridle, resolved not to

incur the indignation of either by a hasty intrusion on their conference. They were probably aware of his approach, for he had not halted for a moment before the Dwarf returned to his cottage; and the taller figure who had accompanied him, glided round the enclosure of the garden, and seemed to disappear from the eyes of the admiring Hobbie.

"Saw ever mortal the like o' that!" said Elliot; "but my case is desperate, sae, if he were Beelzebub himsell, I'se venture down the brae on him."

Yet, notwithstanding his assumed courage, he slackened his pace, when, nearly upon the very spot where he had last seen the tall figure, he discerned, as if lurking among the long heather, a small black rough-looking object, like a terrier dog.

"He has nae dog that ever I heard of," said Hobbie, "but mony a deil about his hand — Lord forgie me for saying sic a word! — It keeps its grund, be what it like — I'm judging it's a badger; but whae kens what shapes thae bogles will take to fright a body? it will maybe start up like a lion or a crocodile when I come nearer. I'se e'en drive a stane at it, for if it change its shape when I'm ower near, Tarras will never stand it; and it will be ower muckle to hae him and the deil to fight wi' baith at ance."

He therefore cautiously threw a stone at the object, which continued motionless. "It's nae living thing, after a'," said Hobbie, approaching, "but the very bag o' siller he flung out o' the window yesterday! and that other queer lang creature has just brought it sae muckle farther on the way to me." He then advanced and lifted the heavy fur pouch, which was quite full of gold. "Mercy on

us!" said Hobbie, whose heart fluttered between glee at the revival of his hopes and prospects in life, and suspicion of the purpose for which this assistance was afforded him — "Mercy on us! it's an awfu' thing to touch what has been sae lately in the claws of something no canny. I canna shake mysell loose o' the belief that there has been some jookery-paukery of Satan's in a' this; but I am determined to conduct mysell like an honest man and a good Christian, come o't what will."

He advanced accordingly to the cottage door, and having knocked repeatedly without receiving any answer, he at length elevated his voice and addressed the inmate of the hut. "Elshie! Father Elshie! I ken ye're within doors, and wauking, for I saw ye at the door-cheek as I cam ower the bent; will ye come out and speak just a gliff to ane that has mony thanks to gie ye? — It was a' true ye tell'd me about Westburnflat; but he's sent back Grace safe and skaithless, sae there's nae ill happened yet but what may be suffered or sustained. — Wad ye but come out a gliff, man, or but say ye're listening? — Aweel, since ye winna answer, I'se e'en proceed wi' my tale. Ye see I hae been thinking it wad be a sair thing on twa young folk, like Grace and me, to put aff our marriage for mony years till I was abroad and came back again wi' some gear; and they say folk maunna take booty in the wars as they did lang syne, and the queen's pay is a sma' matter; there's nae gathering gear on that — and then my grandame's auld — and my sisters wad sit peengin' at the ingle-side for want o' me to ding them about — and Earnscliff, or the neighbourhood, or maybe your ain sell, Elshie, might want some good turn that Hob Elliot could do ye —

and it's a pity that the auld house o' the Heughfoot should be wrecked a' thegither. Sae I was thinking — but deil hae me, that I should say sae," continued he, checking himself, "if I can bring mysell to ask a favour of ane that winna sae muckle as ware a word on me, to tell me if he hears me speaking till him."

"Say what thou wilt — do what thou wilt," answered the Dwarf from his cabin, "but begone, and leave me at peace."

"Weel, weel," replied Elliot, "since ye are willing to hear me, I'se make my tale short. Since ye are sae kind as to say ye are content to lend me as muckle siller as will stock and plenish the Heughfoot, I am content, on my part, to accept the courtesy wi' mony kind thanks; and troth, I think it will be as safe in my hands as yours, if ye leave it flung about in that gate for the first loon body to lift, forbye the risk o' bad neighbours that can win through steekit doors and lockfast places, as I can tell to my cost. I say, since ye hae sae muckle consideration for me, I'se be blithe to accept your kindness; and my mother and me (she's a life-renter, and I am fiar, o' the lands o' Wideopen) would grant you a wadset, or an heritable bond, for the siller, and to pay the annual-rent half-yearly; and Saunders Wyliecoat to draw the bond, and you to be at nae charge wi' the writings."

"Cut short thy jargon, and begone," said the Dwarf; "thy loquacious bull-headed honesty makes thee a more intolerable plague than the light-fingered courtier who would take a man's all without troubling him with either thanks, explanation, or apology. Hence, I say! thou art one of those tame slaves whose word is as good as their bond. Keep

the money, principal and interest, until I demand it of thee."

"But," continued the pertinacious Borderer, "we are a' life-like and death-like, Elshie, and there really should be some black and white on this transaction. Sae just make me a minute, or missive, in ony form ye like, and I'se write it fair ower, and subscribe it before famous witnesses. Only, Elshie, I wad wuss ye to pit naething in't that may be prejudicial to my salvation; for I'll hae the minister to read it ower, and it wad only be exposing yoursell to nae purpose. And now I'm ganging awa', for ye'll be wearied o' my cracks, and I am wearied wi' cracking without an answer — and I'se bring ye a bit o' bride's-cake ane o' thae days, and maybe bring Grace to see you. Ye wad like to see Grace, man, for as dour as ye are — Eh, Lord! I wish he may be weel, that was a sair grane! or, maybe, he thought I was speaking of heavenly grace, and no of Grace Armstrong. Poor man, I am very doubtfu' o' his condition; but I am sure he is as kind to me as if I were his son, and a queer-looking father I wad hae had, if that had been e'en sae."

Hobbie now relieved his benefactor of his presence, and rode blithely home to display his treasure, and consult upon the means of repairing the damage which his fortune had sustained through the aggression of the Red Reiver of Westburnflat.

CHAPTER XI.

Three ruffians seized me yester morn,
Alas! a maiden most forlorn;
They choked my cries with wicked might,
And bound me on a palfrey white:
As sure as Heaven shall pity me,
I cannot tell what men they be.

Christabelle.

THE course of our story must here revert a little, to detail the circumstances which had placed Miss Vere in the unpleasant situation from which she was unexpectedly, and indeed unintentionally liberated, by the appearance of Earnscliff and Elliot, with their friends and followers, before the Tower of Westburnflat.

On the morning preceding the night in which Hobbie's house was plundered and burnt, Miss Vere was requested by her father to accompany him in a walk through a distant part of the romantic grounds which lay round his castle of Ellieslaw. "To hear was to obey," in the true style of Oriental despotism; but Isabella trembled in silence while she followed her father through rough paths, now winding by the side of the river, now ascending the cliffs which serve for its banks. A single servant, selected perhaps for his stupidity, was the only person who attended them. From her father's silence, Isabella little doubted that he had chosen this distant and sequestered scene to resume the argument

which they had so frequently maintained upon the subject of Sir Frederick's addresses, and that he was meditating in what manner he should most effectually impress upon her the necessity of receiving him as her suitor. But her fears seemed for some time to be unfounded. The only sentences which her father from time to time addressed to her, respected the beauties of the romantic landscape through which they strolled, and which varied its features at every step. To these observations, although they seemed to come from a heart occupied by more gloomy as well as more important cares, Isabella endeavoured to answer in a manner as free and unconstrained as it was possible for her to assume, amid the involuntary apprehensions which crowded upon her imagination.

Sustaining with mutual difficulty a desultory conversation, they at length gained the centre of a small wood, composed of large oaks, intermingled with birches, mountain-ashes, hazel, holly, and a variety of underwood. The boughs of the tall trees met closely above, and the underwood filled up each interval between their trunks below. The spot on which they stood was rather more open; still, however, embowered under the natural arcade of tall trees, and darkened on the sides for a space around by a great and lively growth of copse-wood and bushes.

"And here, Isabella," said Mr. Vere, as he pursued the conversation, so often resumed, so often dropped, "here I would erect an altar to Friendship."

"To Friendship, sir!" said Miss Vere; "and why on this gloomy and sequestered spot, rather than elsewhere?"

"O, the propriety of the *locale* is easily vindicated," replied her father, with a sneer. "You know, Miss Vere, (for you, I am well aware, are a learned young lady,) you know, that the Romans were not satisfied with embodying, for the purpose of worship, each useful quality and moral virtue to which they could give a name; but they, moreover, worshipped the same under each variety of titles and attributes which could give a distinct shade, or individual character, to the virtue in question. Now, for example, the Friendship to whom a temple should be here dedicated, is not Masculine Friendship, which abhors and despises duplicity, art, and disguise; but Female Friendship, which consists in little else than a mutual disposition on the part of the friends, as they call themselves, to abet each other in obscure fraud and petty intrigue."

"You are severe, sir," said Miss Vere.

"Only just," said her father; "a humble copier I am from nature, with the advantage of contemplating two such excellent studies as Lucy Ilderton and yourself."

"If I have been unfortunate enough to offend, sir, I can conscientiously excuse Miss Ilderton from being either my counsellor or confidant."

"Indeed! how came you, then," said Mr. Vere, "by the flippancy of speech, and pertness of argument, by which you have disgusted Sir Frederick, and given me of late such deep offence?"

"If my manner has been so unfortunate as to displease you, sir, it is impossible for me to apologize too deeply, or too sincerely; but I cannot confess the same contrition for having answered Sir Frederick flippantly when he pressed me rudely.

Since he forgot I was a lady, it was time to show him that I am at least a woman."

"Reserve, then, your pertness for those who press you on the topic, Isabella," said her father coldly; "for my part, I am weary of the subject, and will never speak upon it again."

"God bless you, my dear father," said Isabella, seizing his reluctant hand; "there is nothing you can impose on me, save the task of listening to this man's persecution, that I will call, or think, a hardship."

"You are very obliging, Miss Vere, when it happens to suit you to be dutiful," said her unrelenting father, forcing himself at the same time from the affectionate grasp of her hand; "but henceforward, child, I shall save myself the trouble of offering you unpleasant advice on any topic. You must look to yourself."

At this moment four ruffians rushed upon them. Mr. Vere and his servant drew their hangers, which it was the fashion of the time to wear, and attempted to defend themselves and protect Isabella. But while each of them was engaged by an antagonist, she was forced into the thicket by the two remaining villains, who placed her and themselves on horses which stood ready behind the copse-wood. They mounted at the same time, and, placing her between them, set off at a round gallop, holding the reins of her horse on each side. By many an obscure and winding path, over dale and down, through moss and moor, she was conveyed to the tower of Westburnflat, where she remained strictly watched, but not otherwise ill-treated, under the guardianship of the old woman, to whose son that retreat belonged. No entreaties could prevail upon the hag to give Miss Vere any information on the ob-

ject of her being carried forcibly off, and confined in this secluded place. The arrival of Earnscliff, with a strong party of horsemen, before the tower, alarmed the robber. As he had already directed Grace Armstrong to be restored to her friends, it did not occur to him that this unwelcome visit was on her account; and seeing at the head of the party, Earnscliff, whose attachment to Miss Vere was whispered in the country, he doubted not that her liberation was the sole object of the attack upon his fastness. The dread of personal consequences compelled him to deliver up his prisoner in the manner we have already related.

At the moment the tramp of horses was heard which carried off the daughter of Ellieslaw, her father fell to the earth, and his servant, a stout young fellow, who was gaining ground on the ruffian with whom he had been engaged, left the combat to come to his master's assistance, little doubting that he had received a mortal wound. Both the villains immediately desisted from farther combat, and, retreating into the thicket, mounted their horses, and went off at full speed after their companions. Meantime, Dixon had the satisfaction to find Mr. Vere not only alive, but unwounded. He had overreached himself, and stumbled, it seemed, over the root of a tree, in making too eager a blow at his antagonist. The despair he felt at his daughter's disappearance, was, in Dixon's phrase, such as would have melted the heart of a whin stane, and he was so much exhausted by his feelings, and the vain researches which he made to discover the track of the ravishers, that a considerable time elapsed ere he reached home, and communicated the alarm to his domestics.

All his conduct and gestures were those of a desperate man.

"Speak not to me, Sir Frederick," he said impatiently; "you are no father — she was my child, an ungrateful one, I fear, but still my child — my only child. Where is Miss Ilderton? she must know something of this. It corresponds with what I was informed of her schemes. Go, Dixon, call Ratcliffe here — Let him come without a minute's delay."

The person he had named at this moment entered the room.

"I say, Dixon," continued Mr. Vere, in an altered tone, "let Mr. Ratcliffe know, I beg the favour of his company on particular business. — Ah! my dear sir," he proceeded, as if noticing him for the first time, "you are the very man whose advice can be of the utmost service to me in this cruel extremity."

"What has happened, Mr. Vere, to discompose you?" said Mr. Ratcliffe, gravely; and while the Laird of Ellieslaw details to him, with the most animated gestures of grief and indignation, the singular adventure of the morning, we shall take the opportunity to inform our readers of the relative circumstances in which these gentlemen stood to each other.

In early youth, Mr. Vere of Ellieslaw had been remarkable for a career of dissipation, which, in advanced life, he had exchanged for the no less destructive career of dark and turbulent ambition. In both cases, he had gratified the predominant passion without respect to the diminution of his private fortune, although, where such inducements were wanting, he was deemed close, avaricious, and grasp-

ing. His affairs being much embarrassed by his earlier extravagance, he went to England, where he was understood to have formed a very advantageous matrimonial connexion. He was many years absent from his family estate. Suddenly and unexpectedly he returned a widower, bringing with him his daughter, then a girl of about ten years old. From this moment his expense seemed unbounded, in the eyes of the simple inhabitants of his native mountains. It was supposed he must necessarily have plunged himself deeply in debt. Yet he continued to live in the same lavish expense, until some months before the commencement of our narrative, when the public opinion of his embarrassed circumstances was confirmed, by the residence of Mr. Ratcliffe at Ellieslaw Castle, who, by the tacit consent, though obviously to the great displeasure, of the lord of the mansion, seemed, from the moment of his arrival, to assume and exercise a predominant and unaccountable influence in the management of his private affairs.

Mr. Ratcliffe was a grave, steady, reserved man, in an advanced period of life. To those with whom he had occasion to speak upon business, he appeared uncommonly well versed in all its forms. With others he held little communication; but in any casual intercourse, or conversation, displayed the powers of an active and well-informed mind. For some time before taking up his final residence at the castle, he had been an occasional visitor there, and was at such times treated by Mr. Vere (contrary to his general practice towards those who were inferior to him in rank) with marked attention, and even deference. Yet his arrival always appeared to be an embarrassment to his host, and his depar-

ture a relief; so that, when he became a constant inmate of the family, it was impossible not to observe indications of the displeasure with which Mr. Vere regarded his presence. Indeed, their intercourse formed a singular mixture of confidence and constraint. Mr. Vere's most important affairs were regulated by Mr. Ratcliffe; and although he was none of those indulgent men of fortune, who, too indolent to manage their own business, are glad to devolve it upon another, yet, in many instances, he was observed to give up his own judgment, and submit to the contrary opinions which Mr. Ratcliffe did not hesitate distinctly to express.

Nothing seemed to vex Mr. Vere more than when strangers indicated any observation of the state of tutelage under which he appeared to labour. When it was noticed by Sir Frederick, or any of his intimates, he sometimes repelled their remarks haughtily and indignantly, and sometimes endeavoured to evade them, by saying, with a forced laugh, "That Ratcliffe knew his own importance, but that he was the most honest and skilful fellow in the world; and that it would be impossible for him to manage his English affairs without his advice and assistance." Such was the person who entered the room at the moment Mr. Vere was summoning him to his presence, and who now heard with surprise, mingled with obvious incredulity, the hasty narrative of what had befallen Isabella.

Her father concluded, addressing Sir Frederick and the other gentlemen, who stood around in astonishment, "And now, my friends, you see the most unhappy father in Scotland. Lend me your assistance, gentlemen — give me your advice, Mr. Ratcliffe. I am incapable of acting, or

thinking, under the unexpected violence of such a blow."

"Let us take our horses, call our attendants, and scour the country in pursuit of the villains," said Sir Frederick.

"Is there no one whom you can suspect," said Ratcliffe, gravely, "of having some motive for this strange crime? These are not the days of romance, when ladies are carried off merely for their beauty."

"I fear," said Mr. Vere, "I can too well account for this strange incident. Read this letter, which Miss Lucy Ilderton thought fit to address from my house of Ellieslaw to young Mr. Earnscliff, whom, of all men, I have a hereditary right to call my enemy. You see she writes to him as the confidant of a passion which he has the assurance to entertain for my daughter; tells him she serves his cause with her friend very ardently, but that he has a friend in the garrison who serves him yet more effectually. Look particularly at the pencilled passages, Mr. Ratcliffe, where this meddling girl recommends bold measures, with an assurance that his suit would be successful anywhere beyond the bounds of the barony of Ellieslaw."

"And you argue, from this romantic letter of a very romantic young lady, Mr. Vere," said Ratcliffe, "that young Earnscliff has carried off your daughter, and committed a very great and criminal act of violence, on no better advice and assurance than that of Miss Lucy Ilderton?"

"What else can I think?" said Ellieslaw.

"What else *can* you think?" said Sir Frederick; "or who else could have any motive for committing such a crime?"

"Were that the best mode of fixing the guilt,"

said Mr. Ratcliffe, calmly, "there might easily be pointed out persons to whom such actions are more congenial, and who have also sufficient motives of instigation. Supposing it were judged advisable to remove Miss Vere to some place in which constraint might be exercised upon her inclinations to a degree which cannot at present be attempted under the roof of Ellieslaw Castle — What says Sir Frederick Langley to that supposition?"

"I say," returned Sir Frederick, "that although Mr. Vere may choose to endure in Mr. Ratcliffe freedoms totally inconsistent with his situation in life, I will not permit such license of innuendo, by word or look, to be extended to me, with impunity."

"And I say," said young Mareschal of Mareschal-Wells, who was also a guest at the castle, "that you are all stark-mad to be standing wrangling here, instead of going in pursuit of the ruffians."

"I have ordered off the domestics already in the track most likely to overtake them," said Mr. Vere; "if you will favour me with your company, we will follow them, and assist in the search."

The efforts of the party were totally unsuccessful, probably because Ellieslaw directed the pursuit to proceed in the direction of Earnscliff-Tower, under the supposition that the owner would prove to be the author of the violence, so that they followed a direction diametrically opposite to that in which the ruffians had actually proceeded. In the evening they returned, harassed and out of spirits. But other guests had, in the meanwhile, arrived at the castle; and, after the recent loss sustained by the owner had been related, wondered at, and lamented, the recollection of it was, for the present

drowned in the discussion of deep political intrigues, of which the crisis and explosion were momentarily looked for.

Several of the gentlemen who took part in this divan were Catholics, and all of them stanch Jacobites, whose hopes were at present at the highest pitch, as an invasion, in favour of the Pretender, was daily expected from France, which Scotland, between the defenceless state of its garrisons and fortified places, and the general disaffection of the inhabitants, was rather prepared to welcome than to resist. Ratcliffe, who neither sought to assist at their consultations on this subject, nor was invited to do so, had, in the meanwhile, retired to his own apartment. Miss Ilderton was sequestered from society in a sort of honourable confinement, "until," said Mr. Vere, "she should be safely conveyed home to her father's house," an opportunity for which occurred on the following day.

The domestics could not help thinking it remarkable how soon the loss of Miss Vere, and the strange manner in which it had happened, seemed to be forgotten by the other guests at the castle. They knew not, that those the most interested in her fate were well acquainted with the cause of her being carried off, and the place of her retreat; and that the others, in the anxious and doubtful moments which preceded the breaking forth of a conspiracy, were little accessible to any feelings but what arose immediately out of their own machinations.

CHAPTER XII.

Some one way, some another — Do you know
Where we may apprehend her?

THE researches after Miss Vere were (for the sake of appearances, perhaps) resumed on the succeeding day, with similar bad success, and the party were returning towards Ellieslaw in the evening.

"It is singular," said Mareschal to Ratcliffe, "that four horsemen and a female prisoner should have passed through the country without leaving the slightest trace of their passage. One would think they had traversed the air, or sunk through the ground."

"Men may often," answered Ratcliffe, "arrive at the knowledge of that which *is*, from discovering that which is *not*. We have now scoured every road, path, and track leading from the castle, in all the various points of the compass, saving only that intricate and difficult pass which leads southward down the Westburn, and through the morasses."

"And why have we not examined that?" said Mareschal.

"O, Mr. Vere can best answer that question," replied his companion, dryly.

"Then I will ask it instantly," said Mareschal; and, addressing Mr. Vere, "I am informed, sir," said he, "there is a path we have not examined, leading by Westburnflat."

"O," said Sir Frederick, laughing, "we know the owner of Westburnflat well — a wild lad, that knows

little difference between his neighbour's goods and his own; but, withal, very honest to his principles: He would disturb nothing belonging to Ellieslaw."

"Besides," said Mr. Vere, smiling mysteriously, "he had other tow on his distaff last night. Have you not heard young Elliot of the Heugh-foot has had his house burnt, and his cattle driven away, because he refused to give up his arms to some honest men that think of starting for the king?"

The company smiled upon each other, as at hearing of an exploit which favoured their own views.

"Yet, nevertheless," resumed Mareschal, "I think we ought to ride in this direction also, otherwise we shall certainly be blamed for our negligence."

No reasonable objection could be offered to this proposal, and the party turned their horses' heads towards Westburnflat.

They had not proceeded very far in that direction when the trampling of horses was heard, and a small body of riders were perceived advancing to meet them.

"There comes Earnscliff," said Mareschal; "I know his bright bay with the star in his front."

"And there is my daughter along with him," exclaimed Vere, furiously. "Who shall call my suspicions false or injurious now? Gentlemen — friends — lend me the assistance of your swords for the recovery of my child."

He unsheathed his weapon, and was imitated by Sir Frederick and several of the party, who prepared to charge those that were advancing towards them. But the greater part hesitated.

"They come to us in all peace and security," said Mareschal-Wells; "let us first hear what account they give us of this mysterious affair. If Miss Vere

has sustained the slightest insult or injury from Earnscliff, I will be first to revenge her; but let us hear what they say."

"You do me wrong by your suspicions, Mareschal," continued Vere; "you are the last I would have expected to hear express them."

"You injure yourself, Ellieslaw, by your violence, though the cause may excuse it."

He then advanced a little before the rest, and called out, with a loud voice, — "Stand, Mr. Earnscliff; or do you and Miss Vere advance alone to meet us. You are charged with having carried that lady off from her father's house; and we are here in arms to shed our best blood for her recovery, and for bringing to justice those who have injured her."

"And who would do that more willingly than I, Mr. Mareschal?" said Earnscliff, haughtily, — "than I, who had the satisfaction this morning to liberate her from the dungeon in which I found her confined, and who am now escorting her back to the castle of Ellieslaw?"

"Is this so, Miss Vere?" said Mareschal.

"It is," answered Isabella, eagerly, — "it is so; for Heaven's sake sheathe your swords. I will swear by all that is sacred, that I was carried off by ruffians, whose persons and object were alike unknown to me, and am now restored to freedom by means of this gentleman's gallant interference."

"By whom, and wherefore, could this have been done?" pursued Mareschal. — "Had you no knowledge of the place to which you were conveyed? — Earnscliff, where did you find this lady?"

But ere either question could be answered, Ellieslaw advanced, and, returning his sword to the scabbard, cut short the conference.

"When I know," he said, "exactly how much I owe to Mr. Earnscliff, he may rely on suitable acknowledgments; meantime," taking the bridle of Miss Vere's horse, "thus far I thank him for replacing my daughter in the power of her natural guardian."

A sullen bend of the head was returned by Earnscliff with equal haughtiness; and Ellieslaw, turning back with his daughter upon the road to his own house, appeared engaged with her in a conference so earnest, that the rest of the company judged it improper to intrude by approaching them too nearly. In the meantime, Earnscliff, as he took leave of the other gentlemen, belonging to Ellieslaw's party, said aloud, "Although I am unconscious of any circumstance in my conduct that can authorize such a suspicion, I cannot but observe, that Mr. Vere seems to believe that I have had some hand in the atrocious violence which has been offered to his daughter. I request you, gentlemen, to take notice of my explicit denial of a charge so dishonourable; and that, although I can pardon the bewildering feelings of a father in such a moment, yet, if any other gentleman" (he looked hard at Sir Frederick Langley) "thinks my word and that of Miss Vere, with the evidence of my friends who accompany me, too slight for my exculpation, I will be happy — most happy — to repel the charge, as becomes a man who counts his honour dearer than his life."

"And I'll be his second," said Simon of Hackburn, "and take up ony twa o' ye, gentle or semple, laird or loon; it's a' ane to Simon."

"Who is that rough-looking fellow?" said Sir Frederick Langley, "and what has he to do with the quarrels of gentlemen?"

"I'se be a lad frae the Hie Te'iot," said Simon, "and I'se quarrel wi' ony body I like, except the king, or the laird I live under."

"Come," said Mareschal, "let us have no brawls. — Mr. Earnscliff, although we do not think alike in some things, I trust we may be opponents, even enemies, if fortune will have it so, without losing our respect for birth, fair-play, and each other. I believe you as innocent of this matter as I am myself; and I will pledge myself that my cousin Ellieslaw, as soon as the perplexity attending these sudden events has left his judgment to its free exercise, shall handsomely acknowledge the very important service you have this day rendered him."

"To have served your cousin is a sufficient reward in itself. — Good evening, gentlemen," continued Earnscliff, "I see most of your party are already on their way to Ellieslaw."

Then saluting Mareschal with courtesy, and the rest of the party with indifference, Earnscliff turned his horse and rode towards the Heugh-foot, to concert measures with Hobbie Elliot for farther researches after his bride, of whose restoration to her friends he was still ignorant.

"There he goes," said Mareschal; "he is a fine, gallant young fellow, upon my soul; and yet I should like well to have a thrust with him on the green turf. I was reckoned at college nearly his equal with the foils, and I should like to try him at sharps."

"In my opinion," answered Sir Frederick Langley, "we have done very ill in having suffered him, and those men who are with him, to go off without taking away their arms; for the Whigs are very likely to draw to a head under such a sprightly young fellow as that."

"For shame, Sir Frederick!" exclaimed Mareschal; "do you think that Ellieslaw could, in honour, consent to any violence being offered to Earnscliff, when he entered his bounds only to bring back his daughter? or, if he were to be of your opinion, do you think that I, and the rest of these gentlemen, would disgrace ourselves by assisting in such a transaction? No, no, fair play and auld Scotland for ever! When the sword is drawn, I will be as ready to use it as any man; but while it is in the sheath, let us behave like gentlemen and neighbours."

Soon after this colloquy they reached the castle, when Ellieslaw, who had been arrived a few minutes before, met them in the court-yard.

"How is Miss Vere? and have you learned the cause of her being carried off?" asked Mareschal hastily.

"She is retired to her apartment greatly fatigued; and I cannot expect much light upon her adventure till her spirits are somewhat recruited," replied her father. "She and I were not the less obliged to you, Mareschal, and to my other friends, for their kind enquiries. But I must suppress the father's feelings for a while to give myself up to those of the patriot. You know this is the day fixed for our final decision — time presses — our friends are arriving, and I have opened house, not only for the gentry, but for the under spur-leathers whom we must necessarily employ. We have, therefore, little time to prepare to meet them. — Look over these lists, Marchie (an abbreviation by which Mareschal-Wells was known among his friends). Do you, Sir Frederick, read these letters from Lothian and the west — all is ripe for the sickle, and we have but to summon out the reapers."

"With all my heart," said Mareschal; "the more mischief the better sport."

Sir Frederick looked grave and disconcerted.

"Walk aside with me, my good friend," said Ellieslaw to the sombre baronet; "I have something for your private ear, with which I know you will be gratified."

They walked into the house, leaving Ratcliffe and Mareschal standing together in the court.

"And so," said Ratcliffe, "the gentlemen of your political persuasion think the downfall of this government so certain, that they disdain even to throw a decent disguise over the machinations of their party?"

"Faith, Mr. Ratcliffe," answered Mareschal, "the actions and sentiments of *your* friends may require to be veiled, but I am better pleased that ours can go barefaced."

"And is it possible," continued Ratcliffe, "that you, who, notwithstanding your thoughtlessness and heat of temper (I beg pardon, Mr. Mareschal, I am a plain man) — that you, who, notwithstanding these constitutional defects, possess natural good sense and acquired information, should be infatuated enough to embroil yourself in such desperate proceedings? How does your head feel when you are engaged in these dangerous conferences?"

"Not quite so secure on my shoulders," answered Mareschal, "as if I were talking of hunting and hawking. I am not of so indifferent a mould as my cousin Ellieslaw, who speaks treason as if it were a child's nursery rhymes, and loses and recovers that sweet girl, his daughter, with a good deal less emotion on both occasions, than would have affected me had I lost and recovered a greyhound puppy. My temper is not quite so inflexible

nor my hate against government so inveterate, as to blind me to the full danger of the attempt."

"Then why involve yourself in it?" said Ratcliffe.

"Why, I love this poor exiled king with all my heart; and my father was an old Killiecrankie-man, and I long to see some amends on the Unionist courtiers, that have bought and sold old Scotland, whose crown has been so long independent."

"And for the sake of these shadows," said his monitor, "you are going to involve your country in war, and yourself in trouble?"

"*I* involve? No! — but, trouble for trouble, I had rather it came to-morrow than a month hence. *Come,* I know it will; and, as your country folks say, better soon than syne — it will never find me younger — and as for hanging, as Sir John Falstaff says, I can become a gallows as well as another. You know the end of the old ballad;

> "Sae dauntonly, sae wantonly,
> Sae rantingly gaed he,
> He play'd a spring, and danced a round,
> Beneath the gallows tree."

"Mr. Mareschal, I am sorry for you," said his grave adviser.

"I am obliged to you, Mr. Ratcliffe; but I would not have you judge of our enterprise by my way of vindicating it; there are wiser heads than mine at the work."

"Wiser heads than yours may lie as low," said Ratcliffe, in a warning tone.

"Perhaps so; but no lighter heart shall; and, to prevent it being made heavier by your remonstrances, I will bid you adieu, Mr. Ratcliffe, till dinner-time, when you shall see that my apprehensions have not spoiled my appetite."

CHAPTER XIII.

> To face the garment of rebellion
> With some fine colour, that may please the eye
> Of fickle changelings, and poor discontents,
> Which gape and rub the elbow at the news
> Of hurlyburly innovation.
>
> *Henry the Fourth, Part II.*

THERE had been great preparations made at Ellieslaw-Castle for the entertainment on this important day, when not only the gentlemen of note in the neighbourhood, attached to the Jacobite interest, were expected to rendezvous, but also many subordinate malecontents, whom difficulty of circumstances, love of change, resentment against England, or any of the numerous causes which inflamed men's passions at the time, rendered apt to join in perilous enterprise. The men of rank and substance were not many in number; for almost all the large proprietors stood aloof, and most of the smaller gentry and yeomanry were of the Presbyterian persuasion, and therefore, however displeased with the Union, unwilling to engage in a Jacobite conspiracy. But there were some gentlemen of property, who, either from early principle, from religious motives, or sharing the ambitious views of Ellieslaw, had given countenance to his scheme; and there were, also, some fiery young men, like Mareschal, desirous of signalizing themselves by engaging in a dangerous enterprise, by which they hoped to vindicate the independence

of their country. The other members of the party were persons of inferior rank and desperate fortunes, who were now ready to rise in that part of the country, as they did afterwards in the year 1715, under Forster and Derwentwater, when a troop, commanded by a Border gentleman, named Douglas, consisted almost entirely of freebooters, among whom the notorious Luck-in-a-bag, as he was called, held a distinguished command. We think it necessary to mention these particulars, applicable solely to the province in which our scene lies; because, unquestionably, the Jacobite party, in the other parts of the kingdom, consisted of much more formidable, as well as much more respectable, materials.

One long table extended itself down the ample hall of Ellieslaw Castle, which was still left much in the state in which it had been one hundred years before, stretching, that is, in gloomy length, along the whole side of the castle, vaulted with ribbed arches of freestone, the groins of which sprung from projecting figures, that, carved into all the wild forms which the fantastic imagination of a Gothic architect could devise, grinned, frowned, and gnashed their tusks, at the assembly below. Long narrow windows lighted the banqueting room on both sides, filled up with stained glass, through which the sun emitted a dusky and discoloured light. A banner, which tradition averred to have been taken from the English at the battle of Sark, waved over the chair in which Ellieslaw presided, as if to inflame the courage of the guests, by reminding them of ancient victories over their neighbours. He himself, a portly figure, dressed on this occasion with uncommon care, and with features,

which, though of a stern and sinister expression, might well be termed handsome, looked the old feudal baron extremely well. Sir Frederick Langley was placed on his right hand, and Mr. Mareschal of Mareschal-Wells on his left. Some gentlemen of consideration, with their sons, brothers, and nephews, were seated at the upper end of the table, and among these Mr. Ratcliffe had his place. Beneath the salt-cellar (a massive piece of plate which occupied the midst of the table) sate the *sine nomine turba*, men whose vanity was gratified by holding even this subordinate space at the social board, while the distinction observed in ranking them was a salvo to the pride of their superiors. That the lower house was not very select must be admitted, since Willie of Westburnflat was one of the party. The unabashed audacity of this fellow, in daring to present himself in the house of a gentleman, to whom he had just offered so flagrant an insult, can only be accounted for by supposing him conscious that his share in carrying off Miss Vere was a secret, safe in her possession and that of her father.

Before this numerous and miscellaneous party was placed a dinner, consisting, not indeed of the delicacies of the season, as the newspapers express it, but of viands, ample, solid, and sumptuous, under which the very board groaned. But the mirth was not in proportion to the good cheer. The lower end of the table were, for some time, chilled by constraint and respect on finding themselves members of so august an assembly; and those who were placed around it had those feelings of awe with which P. P., clerk of the parish, describes himself oppressed, when he first uplifted the psalm

in presence of those persons of high worship, the wise Mr. Justice Freeman, the good Lady Jones, and the great Sir Thomas Truby. This ceremonious frost, however, soon gave way before the incentives to merriment, which were liberally supplied, and as liberally consumed by the guests of the lower description. They became talkative, loud, and even clamorous in their mirth.

But it was not in the power of wine or brandy to elevate the spirits of those who held the higher places at the banquet. They experienced the chilling revulsion of spirits which often takes place, when men are called upon to take a desperate resolution, after having placed themselves in circumstances where it is alike difficult to advance or to recede. The precipice looked deeper and more dangerous as they approached the brink, and each waited with an inward emotion of awe, expecting which of his confederates would set the example by plunging himself down. This inward sensation of fear and reluctance acted differently, according to the various habits and characters of the company. One looked grave; another looked silly; a third gazed with apprehension on the empty seats at the higher end of the table, designed for members of the conspiracy whose prudence had prevailed over their political zeal, and who had absented themselves from their consultations at this critical period; and some seemed to be reckoning up in their minds the comparative rank and prospects of those who were present and absent. Sir Frederick Langley was reserved, moody, and discontented. Elliieslaw himself made such forced efforts to raise the spirits of the company, as plainly marked the flagging of his own. Ratcliffe watched the scene with

the composure of a vigilant but uninterested spectator. Mareschal alone, true to the thoughtless vivacity of his character, eat and drank, laughed and jested, and seemed even to find amusement in the embarrassment of the company.

"What has damped our noble courage this morning?" he exclaimed. "We seem to be met at a funeral, where the chief mourners must not speak above their breath, while the mutes and the saulies (looking to the lower end of the table) are carousing below. Ellieslaw, when will you *lift?*[1] where sleeps your spirit, man? and what has quelled the high hope of the Knight of Langley-dale?"

"You speak like a madman," said Ellieslaw; "do you not see how many are absent?"

"And what of that," said Mareschal? "Did you not know before, that one-half of the world are better talkers than doers? For my part, I am much encouraged by seeing at least two-thirds of our friends true to the rendezvous, though I suspect one-half of these came to secure the dinner in case of the worst."

"There is no news from the coast which can amount to certainty of the King's arrival," said another of the company, in that tone of subdued and tremulous whisper which implies a failure of resolution.

"Not a line from the Earl of D——, nor a single gentleman from the southern side of the Border," said a third.

"Who is he that wishes for more men from England," exclaimed Mareschal, in a theatrical tone of affected heroism,

[1] To *lift*, meaning to lift the coffin, is the common expression for commencing a funeral.

'My cousin Ellieslaw? No, my fair cousin,
If we are doom'd to die'" ——

"For God's sake," said Ellieslaw, "spare us your folly at present, Mareschal."

"Well, then," said his kinsman, "I'll bestow my wisdom upon you instead, such as it is. If we have gone forward like fools, do not let us go back like cowards. We have done enough to draw upon us both the suspicion and vengeance of the government; do not let us give up before we have done something to deserve it. — What, will no one speak? Then I'll leap the ditch the first." And, starting up, he filled a beer-glass to the brim with claret, and waving his hand, commanded all to follow his example, and to rise up from their seats. All obeyed — the more qualified guests as if passively, the others with enthusiasm. "Then, my friends, I give you the pledge of the day — The independence of Scotland, and the health of our lawful sovereign, King James the Eighth, now landed in Lothian, and, as I trust and believe, in full possession of his ancient capital!"

He quaffed off the wine, and threw the glass over his head.

"It should never," he said, "be profaned by a meaner toast."

All followed his example, and, amid the crash of glasses and the shouts of the company, pledged themselves to stand or fall with the principles and political interest which their toast expressed.

"You have leaped the ditch with a witness," said Ellieslaw, apart to Mareschal; "but I believe it is all for the best; at all events, we cannot now retreat from our undertaking. One man alone,"

(looking at Ratcliffe) "has refused the pledge; but of that by and by."

Then, rising up, he addressed the company in a style of inflammatory invective against the government and its measures, but especially the Union; a treaty, by means of which, he affirmed, Scotland had been at once cheated of her independence, her commerce, and her honour, and laid as a fettered slave at the foot of the rival, against whom, through such a length of ages, through so many dangers, and by so much blood, she had honourably defended her rights. This was touching a theme which found a responsive chord in the bosom of every man present.

"Our commerce is destroyed," hollowed old John Rewcastle, a Jedburgh smuggler, from the lower end of the table.

"Our agriculture is ruined," said the Laird of Broken-girth-flow, a territory, which, since the days of Adam, had borne nothing but ling and whortleberries.

"Our religion is cut up, root and branch," said the pimple-nosed pastor of the Episcopal meeting-house at Kirkwhistle.

"We shall shortly neither dare shoot a deer nor kiss a wench, without a certificate from the presbytery and kirk-treasurer," said Mareschal-Wells.

"Or make a brandy jeroboam in a frosty morning, without license from a commissioner of excise," said the smuggler.

"Or ride over the fell in a moonless night," said Westburnflat, "without asking leave of young Earnscliff, or some Englified justice of the peace: thae were gude days on the Border when there was neither peace nor justice heard of."

"Let us remember our wrongs at Darien and Glencoe," continued Ellieslaw, "and take arms for the protection of our rights, our fortunes, our lives, and our families."

"Think upon genuine episcopal ordination, without which there can be no lawful clergy," said the divine.

"Think of the piracies committed on our East-Indian trade by Green and the English thieves," said William Willieson, half-owner and sole skipper of a brig that made four voyages annually between Cockpool and Whitehaven.

"Remember your liberties," rejoined Mareschal, who seemed to take a mischievous delight in precipitating the movements of the enthusiasm which he had excited, like a roguish boy, who, having lifted the sluice of a mill-dam, enjoys the clatter of the wheels which he has put in motion, without thinking of the mischief he may have occasioned. "Remember your liberties," he exclaimed; "confound cess, press, and presbytery, and the memory of old Willie that first brought them upon us!"

"Damn the gauger!" echoed old John Rewcastle; "I'll cleave him wi' my ain hand."

"And confound the country-keeper and the constable!" re-echoed Westburnflat; "I'll weize a brace of balls through them before morning."

"We are agreed, then," said Ellieslaw, when the shouts had somewhat subsided, "to bear this state of things no longer?"

"We are agreed to a man," answered his guests.

"Not literally so," said Mr. Ratcliffe; "for though I cannot hope to assuage the violent symptoms which seem so suddenly to have seized upon the company, yet I beg to observe, that so far as the opinion of a single member goes, I do not entirely

coincide in the list of grievances which has been announced, and that I do utterly protest against the frantic measures which you seem disposed to adopt for removing them. I can easily suppose much of what has been spoken may have arisen out of the heat of the moment, or have been said perhaps in jest. But there are some jests of a nature very apt to transpire; and you ought to remember, gentlemen, that stone-walls have ears."

"Stone-walls may have ears," returned Ellieslaw, eyeing him with a look of triumphant malignity, "but domestic spies, Mr. Ratcliffe, will soon find themselves without any, if any such dares to continue his abode in a family where his coming was an unauthorized intrusion, where his conduct has been that of a presumptuous meddler, and from which his exit shall be that of a baffled knave, if he does not know how to take a hint."

"Mr. Vere," returned Ratcliffe, with calm contempt, "I am fully aware, that as soon as my presence becomes useless to you, which it must through the rash step you are about to adopt, it will immediately become unsafe to myself, as it has always been hateful to you. But I have one protection, and it is a strong one; for you would not willingly hear me detail before gentlemen, and men of honour, the singular circumstances in which our connexion took its rise. As to the rest, I rejoice at its conclusion; and as I think that Mr. Mareschal and some other gentlemen will guarantee the safety of my ears and of my throat (for which last I have more reason to be apprehensive) during the course of the night, I shall not leave your castle till to-morrow morning."

"Be it so, sir," replied Mr. Vere; "you are entirely safe from my resentment, because you are beneath it,

and not because I am afraid of your disclosing any family secrets, although, for your own sake, I warn you to beware how you do so. Your agency and intermediation can be of little consequence to one who will win or lose all, as lawful right or unjust usurpation shall succeed in the struggle that is about to ensue. Farewell, sir."

Ratcliffe arose, and cast upon him a look, which Vere seemed to sustain with difficulty, and, bowing to those around him, left the room.

This conversation made an impression on many of the company, which Ellieslaw hastened to dispel, by entering upon the business of the day. Their hasty deliberations went to organize an immediate insurrection. Ellieslaw, Mareschal, and Sir Frederick Langley, were chosen leaders, with powers to direct their farther measures. A place of rendezvous was appointed, at which all agreed to meet early on the ensuing day, with such followers and friends to the cause as each could collect around him. Several of the guests retired to make the necessary preparations; and Ellieslaw made a formal apology to the others, who, with Westburnflat and the old smuggler, continued to ply the bottle stanchly, for leaving the head of the table, as he must necessarily hold a separate and sober conference with the coadjutors whom they had associated with him in the command. The apology was the more readily accepted, as he prayed them, at the same time, to continue to amuse themselves with such refreshments as the cellars of the castle afforded. Shouts of applause followed their retreat; and the names of Vere, Langley, and, above all, of Mareschal, were thundered forth in chorus, and bathed with copious bumpers repeatedly, during the remainder of the evening.

When the principal conspirators had retired into a separate apartment, they gazed on each other for a minute with a sort of embarrassment, which, in Sir Frederick's dark features, amounted to an expression of discontented sullenness. Mareschal was the first to break the pause, saying, with a loud burst of laughter, — "Well! we are fairly embarked now, gentlemen — *vogue la galère!*"

"We may thank you for the plunge," said Ellieslaw.

"Yes; but I don't know how far you will thank me," answered Mareschal, "when I show you this letter which I received just before we sat down. My servant told me it was delivered by a man he had never seen before, who went off at the gallop, after charging him to put it into my own hand."

Ellieslaw impatiently opened the letter, and read aloud —

EDINBURGH, ——.

HOND. SIR, — Having obligations to your family, which shall be nameless, and learning that you are one of the company of adventurers doing business for the house of James and Company, late merchants in London, now in Dunkirk, I think it right to send you this early and private information, that the vessels you expected have been driven off the coast, without having been able to break bulk, or to land any part of their cargo; and that the west-country partners have resolved to withdraw their name from the firm, as it must prove a losing concern. Having good hope you will avail yourself of this early information, to do what is needful for your own security, I rest your humble servant,

NIHIL NAMELESS.

For RALPH MARESCHAL, *of Mareschal-Wells:*
These, with care and speed.

Sir Frederick's jaw dropped, and his countenance blackened, as the letter was read, and Ellieslaw exclaimed, — "Why, this affects the very main-spring of our enterprise. If the French fleet, with the king on board, has been chased off by the English, as this d—d scrawl seems to intimate, where are we?"

"Just where we were this morning, I think," said Mareschal, still laughing.

"Pardon me, and a truce to your ill-timed mirth, Mr. Mareschal; this morning we were not committed publicly, as we now stand committed by your own mad act, when you had a letter in your pocket apprising you that our undertaking was desperate."

"Ay, ay, I expected you would say so. But, in the first place, my friend Nihil Nameless and his letter may be all a flam; and, moreover, I would have you know that I am tired of a party that does nothing but form bold resolutions over night, and sleep them away with their wine before morning. The government are now unprovided of men and ammunition; in a few weeks they will have enough of both: the country is now in a flame against them; in a few weeks, betwixt the effects of self-interest, of fear, and of lukewarm indifference, which are already so visible, this first fervour will be as cold as Christmas. So, as I was determined to go the vole, I have taken care you shall dip as deep as I; it signifies nothing plunging. You are fairly in the bog, and must struggle through."

"You are mistaken with respect to one of us, Mr. Mareschal," said Sir Frederick Langley; and, applying himself to the bell, he desired the person who entered to order his servants and horses instantly.

"You must not leave us, Sir Frederick," said Ellieslaw; "we have our musters to go over."

"I will go to-night, Mr. Vere," said Sir Frederick, "and write you my intentions in this matter when I am at home."

"Ay," said Mareschal, "and send them by a troop of horse from Carlisle to make us prisoners? Look ye, Sir Frederick, I for one will neither be deserted nor betrayed; and if you leave Ellieslaw Castle to-night, it shall be by passing over my dead body."

"For shame! Mareschal," said Mr. Vere, "how can you so hastily misinterpret our friend's intentions? I am sure Sir Frederick can only be jesting with us; for, were he not too honourable to dream of deserting the cause, he cannot but remember the full proofs we have of his accession to it, and his eager activity in advancing it. He cannot but be conscious, besides, that the first information will be readily received by government, and that if the question be, which can first lodge intelligence of the affair, we can easily save a few hours on him."

"You should say *you*, and not we, when you talk of priorities in such a race of treachery; for my part, I won't enter my horse for such a plate," said Mareschal; and added betwixt his teeth, "A pretty pair of fellows to trust a man's neck with!"

"I am not to be intimidated from doing what I think proper," said Sir Frederick Langley; "and my first step shall be to leave Ellieslaw. I have no reason to keep faith with one" (looking at Vere) "who has kept none with me."

"In what respect," said Ellieslaw, silencing, with a motion of his hand, his impetuous kinsman — "how have I disappointed you, Sir Frederick?"

"In the nearest and most tender point — you

have trifled with me concerning our proposed alliance, which you well knew was the gage of our political undertaking. This carrying off and this bringing back of Miss Vere, — the cold reception I have met with from her, and the excuses with which you cover it, I believe to be mere evasions, that you may yourself retain possession of the estates which are hers by right, and make me, in the meanwhile, a tool in your desperate enterprise, by holding out hopes and expectations which you are resolved never to realize."

"Sir Frederick, I protest, by all that is sacred"——

"I will listen to no protestations; I have been cheated with them too long," answered Sir Frederick.

"If you leave us," said Ellieslaw, "you cannot but know both your ruin and ours is certain; all depends on our adhering together."

"Leave me to take care of myself," returned the knight; "but were what you say true, I would rather perish than be fooled any farther."

"Can nothing — no surety convince you of my sincerity?" said Ellieslaw, anxiously; "this morning I should have repelled your unjust suspicions as an insult; but situated as we now are"——

"You feel yourself compelled to be sincere?" retorted Sir Frederick. "If you would have me think so, there is but one way to convince me of it — let your daughter bestow her hand on me this evening."

"So soon? — impossible," answered Vere; "think of her late alarm — of our present undertaking."

"I will listen to nothing but to her consent, plighted at the altar. You have a chapel in the castle — Doctor Hobbler is present among the company — this proof of your good faith to-night, and

we are again joined in heart and hand. If you refuse me when it is so much for your advantage to consent, how shall I trust you to-morrow, when I shall stand committed in your undertaking, and unable to retract?"

"And I am to understand, that, if you can be made my son-in-law to-night, our friendship is renewed?" said Ellieslaw.

"Most infallibly, and most inviolably," replied Sir Frederick.

"Then," said Vere, "though what you ask is premature, indelicate, and unjust towards my character, yet, Sir Frederick, give me your hand — my daughter shall be your wife."

"This night?"

"This very night," replied Ellieslaw, "before the clock strikes twelve."

"With her own consent, I trust," said Mareschal; "for I promise you both, gentlemen, I will not stand tamely by, and see any violence put on the will of my pretty kinswoman."

"Another pest in this hot-headed fellow," muttered Ellieslaw; and then aloud, "With her own consent? For what do you take me, Mareschal, that you should suppose your interference necessary to protect my daughter against her father? Depend upon it, she has no repugnance to Sir Frederick Langley."

"Or rather to be called Lady Langley? faith, like enough — there are many women might be of her mind; and I beg your pardon, but these sudden demands and concessions alarmed me a little on her account."

"It is only the suddenness of the proposal that embarrasses me," said Ellieslaw; "but perhaps if

she is found intractable, Sir Frederick will consider" ——

"I will consider nothing, Mr. Vere — your daughter's hand to-night, or I depart, were it at midnight — there is my ultimatum."

"I embrace it," said Ellieslaw; "and I will leave you to talk upon our military preparations, while I go to prepare my daughter for so sudden a change of condition."

So saying, he left the company.

CHAPTER XIV.

> He brings Earl Osmond to receive my vows.
> O dreadful change! for Tancred, haughty Osmond.
>
> *Tancred and Sigismunda.*

Mr. Vere, whom long practice of dissimulation had enabled to model his very gait and footsteps to aid the purposes of deception, walked along the stone passage, and up the first flight of steps towards Miss Vere's apartment, with the alert, firm, and steady pace of one, who is bound, indeed, upon important business, but who entertains no doubt he can terminate his affairs satisfactorily. But when out of hearing of the gentlemen whom he had left, his step became so slow and irresolute, as to correspond with his doubts and his fears. At length he paused in an antechamber to collect his ideas, and form his plan of argument, before approaching his daughter.

"In what more hopeless and inextricable dilemma was ever an unfortunate man involved!"—Such was the tenor of his reflections.—"If we now fall to pieces by disunion, there can be little doubt that the government will take my life as the prime agitator of the insurrection. Or, grant I could stoop to save myself by a hasty submission, am I not, even in that case, utterly ruined? I have broken irreconcilably with Ratcliffe, and can have nothing to expect from that quarter but insult and persecution. I must wander forth an impoverished and

dishonoured man, without even the means of sustaining life, far less wealth sufficient to counterbalance the infamy which my countrymen, both those whom I desert and those whom I join, will attach to the name of the political renegade. It is not to be thought of. And yet, what choice remains between this lot and the ignominious scaffold? Nothing can save me but reconciliation with these men; and, to accomplish this, I have promised to Langley that Isabella shall marry him ere midnight, and to Mareschal, that she shall do so without compulsion. I have but one remedy betwixt me and ruin — her consent to take a suitor whom she dislikes, upon such short notice as would disgust her, even were he a favoured lover — But I must trust to the romantic generosity of her disposition; and let me paint the necessity of her obedience ever so strongly, I cannot overcharge its reality."

Having finished this sad chain of reflections upon his perilous condition, he entered his daughter's apartment with every nerve bent up to the support of the argument which he was about to sustain. Though a deceitful and ambitious man, he was not so devoid of natural affection but that he was shocked at the part he was about to act, in practising on the feelings of a dutiful and affectionate child; but the recollections, that, if he succeeded, his daughter would only be trepanned into an advantageous match, and that, if he failed, he himself was a lost man, were quite sufficient to drown all scruples.

He found Miss Vere seated by the window of her dressing-room, her head reclining on her hand, and either sunk in slumber, or so deeply engaged in

meditation, that she did not hear the noise he made at his entrance. He approached with his features composed to a deep expression of sorrow and sympathy, and, sitting down beside her, solicited her attention by quietly taking her hand, a motion which he did not fail to accompany with a deep sigh.

"My father!" said Isabella, with a sort of start, which expressed at least as much fear, as joy or affection.

"Yes, Isabella," said Vere, "your unhappy father, who comes now as a penitent to crave forgiveness of his daughter for an injury done to her in the excess of his affection, and then to take leave of her for ever."

"Sir? Offence to me? Take leave for ever? What does all this mean?" said Miss Vere.

"Yes, Isabella, I am serious. But first let me ask you, have you no suspicion that I may have been privy to the strange chance which befell you yesterday morning?"

"You, sir?" answered Isabella, stammering between a consciousness that he had guessed her thoughts justly, and the shame as well as fear which forbade her to acknowledge a suspicion so degrading and so unnatural.

"Yes!" he continued, "your hesitation confesses that you entertained such an opinion, and I have now the painful task of acknowledging that your suspicions have done me no injustice. But listen to my motives. In an evil hour I countenanced the addresses of Sir Frederick Langley, conceiving it impossible that you could have any permanent objections to a match where the advantages were, in most respects, on your side. In a worse, I entered

with him into measures calculated to restore our banished monarch, and the independence of my country. He has taken advantage of my unguarded confidence, and now has my life at his disposal."

"Your life, sir?" said Isabella, faintly.

"Yes, Isabella," continued her father, "the life of him who gave life to you. So soon as I foresaw the excesses into which his headlong passion (for, to do him justice, I believe his unreasonable conduct arises from excess of attachment to you) was likely to hurry him, I endeavoured, by finding a plausible pretext for your absence for some weeks, to extricate myself from the dilemma in which I am placed. For this purpose I wished, in case your objections to the match continued insurmountable, to have sent you privately for a few months to the convent of your maternal aunt at Paris. By a series of mistakes you have been brought from the place of secrecy and security which I had destined for your temporary abode. Fate has baffled my last chance of escape, and I have only to give you my blessing, and send you from the castle with Mr. Ratcliffe, who now leaves it; my own fate will soon be decided."

"Good Heaven, sir! can this be possible?" exclaimed Isabella. "O, why was I freed from the restraint in which you placed me? or why did you not impart your pleasure to me?"

"Think an instant, Isabella. Would you have had me prejudice in your opinion the friend I was most desirous of serving, by communicating to you the injurious eagerness with which he pursued his object? Could I do so honourably, having promised to assist his suit? — But it is all over. I and Mareschal have made up our minds to die like men; it

only remains to send you from hence under a safe escort."

"Great powers! and is there no remedy?" said the terrified young woman.

"None, my child," answered Vere, gently, "unless one which you would not advise your father to adopt — to be the first to betray his friends."

"O, no! no!" she answered, abhorrently yet hastily, as if to reject the temptation which the alternative presented to her. "But is there no other hope — through flight — through mediation — through supplication? — I will bend my knee to Sir Frederick!"

"It would be a fruitless degradation; he is determined on his course, and I am equally resolved to stand the hazard of my fate. On one condition only he will turn aside from his purpose, and that condition my lips shall never utter to you."

"Name it, I conjure you, my dear father!" exclaimed Isabella. "What *can* he ask that we ought not to grant, to prevent the hideous catastrophe with which you are threatened?"

"That, Isabella," said Vere, solemnly, "you shall never know, until your father's head has rolled on the bloody scaffold; then, indeed, you will learn there was one sacrifice by which he might have been saved."

"And why not speak it now?" said Isabella; "do you fear I would flinch from the sacrifice of fortune for your preservation? or would you bequeath me the bitter legacy of life-long remorse, so oft as I shall think that you perished, while there remained one mode of preventing the dreadful misfortune that overhangs you?"

"Then, my child," said Vere, "since you press

me to name what I would a thousand times rather leave in silence, I must inform you that he will accept for ransom nothing but your hand in marriage, and that conferred before midnight this very evening!"

"This evening, sir?" said the young lady, struck with horror at the proposal — "and to such a man! — A man? — a monster, who could wish to win the daughter by threatening the life of the father — it is impossible!"

"You say right, my child," answered her father, "it is indeed impossible; nor have I either the right or the wish to exact such a sacrifice — It is the course of nature that the old should die and be forgot, and the young should live and be happy."

"My father die, and his child can save him! — but no — no — my dear father, pardon me, it is impossible; you only wish to guide me to your wishes. I know your object is what you think my happiness, and this dreadful tale is only told to influence my conduct and subdue my scruples."

"My daughter," replied Ellieslaw, in a tone where offended authority seemed to struggle with parental affection, "my child suspects me of inventing a false tale to work upon her feelings! Even this I must bear, and even from this unworthy suspicion I must descend to vindicate myself. You know the stainless honour of your cousin Mareschal — mark what I shall write to him, and judge from his answer, if the danger in which we stand is not real, and whether I have not used every means to avert it."

He sate down, wrote a few lines hastily, and handed them to Isabella, who, after repeated and

painful efforts, cleared her eyes and head sufficiently to discern their purport.

"DEAR COUSIN," — said the billet, — "I find my daughter, as I expected, in despair at the untimely and premature urgency of Sir Frederick Langley. She cannot even comprehend the peril in which we stand, or how much we are in his power — Use your influence with him, for Heaven's sake, to modify proposals, to the acceptance of which I cannot, and will not, urge my child against all her own feelings, as well as those of delicacy and propriety, and oblige your loving cousin, R. V."

In the agitation of the moment, when her swimming eyes and dizzy brain could hardly comprehend the sense of what she looked upon, it is not surprising that Miss Vere should have omitted to remark that this letter seemed to rest her scruples rather upon the form and time of the proposed union, than on a rooted dislike to the suitor proposed to her. Mr. Vere rang the bell, and gave the letter to a servant to be delivered to Mr. Mareschal, and, rising from his chair, continued to traverse the apartment in silence and in great agitation until the answer was returned. He glanced it over, and wrung the hand of his daughter as he gave it to her. The tenor was as follows: —

"MY DEAR KINSMAN, — I have already urged the knight on the point you mention, and I find him as fixed as Cheviot. I am truly sorry my fair cousin should be pressed to give up any of her maidenly rights. Sir Frederick consents, however, to leave the castle with me the instant the ceremony is performed, and we will raise our followers and begin the fray. Thus there is great hope the bridegroom may be knocked on the head before he and the bride can

meet again, so Bell has a fair chance to be Lady Langley *à très bon marché*. For the rest, I can only say, that if she can make up her mind to the alliance at all — it is no time for mere maiden ceremony — my pretty cousin must needs consent to marry in haste, or we shall all repent at leisure, or rather have very little leisure to repent ; which is all at present from him who rests your affectionate kinsman,

R. M."

"P. S. Tell Isabella that I would rather cut the knight's throat after all, and end the dilemma that way, than see her constrained to marry him against her will."

When Isabella had read this letter, it dropped from her hand, and she would, at the same time, have fallen from her chair, had she not been supported by her father.

"My God, my child will die!" exclaimed Vere, the feelings of nature overcoming, even in *his* breast, the sentiments of selfish policy; "look up, Isabella — look up, my child — come what will, you shall not be the sacrifice — I will fall myself with the consciousness I leave you happy — My child may weep on my grave, but she shall not — not in this instance — reproach my memory." He called a servant. — "Go, bid Ratcliffe come hither directly."

During this interval, Miss Vere became deadly pale, clenched her hands, pressing the palms strongly together, closed her eyes, and drew her lips with strong compression, as if the severe constraint which she put upon her internal feelings extended even to her muscular organization. Then raising her head, and drawing in her breath strongly ere she spoke, she said, with firmness, — "Father, I consent to the marriage."

"You shall not — you shall not, — my child — my dear child — you shall not embrace certain misery to free me from uncertain danger."

So exclaimed Ellieslaw; and, strange and inconsistent beings that we are! he expressed the real though momentary feelings of his heart.

"Father," repeated Isabella, "I will consent to this marriage."

"No, my child, no — not now at least — we will humble ourselves to obtain delay from him; and yet, Isabella, could you overcome a dislike which has no real foundation, think, in other respects, what a match! — wealth — rank — importance."

"Father!" reiterated Isabella, "I have consented."

It seemed as if she had lost the power of saying any thing else, or even of varying the phrase which, with such effort, she had compelled herself to utter.

"Heaven bless thee, my child! — Heaven bless thee! — And it *will* bless thee with riches, with pleasure, with power."

Miss Vere faintly entreated to be left by herself for the rest of the evening.

"But will you not receive Sir Frederick?" said her father, anxiously.

"I will meet him," she replied, "I will meet him — when I must, and where I must; but spare me now."

"Be it so, my dearest; you shall know no restraint that I can save you from. Do not think too hardly of Sir Frederick for this, — it is an excess of passion."

Isabella waved her hand impatiently.

"Forgive me, my child — I go — Heaven bless thee. At eleven — if you call me not before — at eleven I come to seek you."

When he left Isabella she dropped upon her knees — "Heaven aid me to support the resolution I have taken — Heaven only can — O, poor Earnscliff! who shall comfort him? and with what contempt will he pronounce her name, who listened to him to-day and gave herself to another at night! But let him despise me — better so than that he should know the truth — Let him despise me; if it will but lessen his grief, I should feel comfort in the loss of his esteem."

She wept bitterly; attempting in vain, from time to time, to commence the prayer for which she had sunk on her knees, but unable to calm her spirits sufficiently for the exercise of devotion. As she remained in this agony of mind, the door of her apartment was slowly opened.

CHAPTER XV.

> The darksome cave they enter, where they found
> The woful man, low sitting on the ground,
> Musing full sadly in his sullen mind.
>
> *Faëry Queen.*

THE intruder on Miss Vere's sorrows was Ratcliffe. Ellieslaw had, in the agitation of his mind, forgotten to countermand the order he had given to call him thither, so that he opened the door with the words, "You sent for me, Mr. Vere." Then looking around — "Miss Vere, alone! on the ground! and in tears!"

"Leave me — leave me, Mr. Ratcliffe," said the unhappy young lady.

"I must not leave you," said Ratcliffe; "I have been repeatedly requesting admittance to take my leave of you, and have been refused, until your father himself sent for me. Blame me not, if I am bold and intrusive; I have a duty to discharge which makes me so."

"I cannot listen to you — I cannot speak to you, Mr. Ratcliffe; take my best wishes, and for God's sake leave me."

"Tell me only," said Ratcliffe, "is it true that this monstrous match is to go forward, and this very night? I heard the servants proclaim it as I was on the great staircase — I heard the directions given to clear out the chapel."

"Spare me, Mr. Ratcliffe," replied the luckless bride; "and from the state in which you see me, judge of the cruelty of these questions."

"Married? to Sir Frederick Langley? and this night? It must not — cannot — shall not be."

"It *must* be, Mr. Ratcliffe, or my father is ruined."

"Ah! I understand," answered Ratcliffe; "and you have sacrificed yourself to save him who — But let the virtue of the child atone for the faults of the father — it is no time to rake them up.— What *can* be done? Time presses — I know but one remedy — with four-and-twenty hours I might find many — Miss Vere, you must implore the protection of the only human being who has it in his power to control the course of events which threatens to hurry you before it."

"And what human being," answered Miss Vere, "has such power?"

"Start not when I name him," said Ratcliffe, coming near her, and speaking in a low but distinct voice. "It is he who is called Elshender the Recluse of Mucklestane-Moor."

"You are mad, Mr. Ratcliffe, or you mean to insult my misery by an ill-timed jest!"

"I am as much in my senses, young lady," answered her adviser, "as you are; and I am no idle jester, far less with misery, least of all with your misery. I swear to you that this being (who is other far than what he seems) actually possesses the means of redeeming you from this hateful union."

"And of insuring my father's safety?"

"Yes! even that," said Ratcliffe, "if you plead his cause with him — yet how to obtain admittance to the Recluse!"

"Fear not that," said Miss Vere, suddenly recollecting the incident of the rose; "I remember he desired me to call upon him for aid in my extremity, and gave me this flower as a token. Ere it faded away entirely, I would need, he said, his assistance: is it possible his words can have been aught but the ravings of insanity?"

"Doubt it not — fear it not — but above all," said Ratcliffe, "let us lose no time — Are you at liberty, and unwatched?"

"I believe so," said Isabella; "but what would you have me to do?"

"Leave the castle instantly," said Ratcliffe, "and throw yourself at the feet of this extraordinary man, who, in circumstances that seem to argue the extremity of the most contemptible poverty, possesses yet an almost absolute influence over your fate. — Guests and servants are deep in their carouse — the leaders sitting in conclave on their treasonable schemes — my horse stands ready in the stable — I will saddle one for you, and meet you at the little garden-gate — O, let no doubt of my prudence or fidelity prevent your taking the only step in your power to escape the dreadful fate which must attend the wife of Sir Frederick Langley!"

"Mr. Ratcliffe," said Miss Vere, "you have always been esteemed a man of honour and probity, and a drowning wretch will always catch at the feeblest twig, — I will trust you — I will follow your advice — I will meet you at the garden-gate."

She bolted the outer-door of her apartment as soon as Mr. Ratcliffe left her, and descended to the garden by a separate stair of communication which opened to her dressing-room. On the way she felt inclined to retract the consent she had so hastily

given to a plan so hopeless and extravagant. But as she passed in her descent a private door which entered into the chapel from the back-stair, she heard the voice of the female-servants as they were employed in the task of cleaning it.

"Married! and to sae bad a man — Ewhow, sirs! ony thing rather than that."

"They are right — they are right," said Miss Vere, "any thing rather than that!"

She hurried to the garden. Mr. Ratcliffe was true to his appointment — the horses stood saddled at the garden-gate, and in a few minutes they were advancing rapidly towards the hut of the Solitary.

While the ground was favourable, the speed of their journey was such as to prevent much communication; but when a steep ascent compelled them to slacken their pace, a new cause of apprehension occurred to Miss Vere's mind.

"Mr. Ratcliffe," she said, pulling up her horse's bridle, "let us prosecute no farther a journey, which nothing but the extreme agitation of my mind can vindicate my having undertaken — I am well aware that this man passes among the vulgar as being possessed of supernatural powers, and carrying on an intercourse with beings of another world; but I would have you aware I am neither to be imposed on by such follies, nor, were I to believe in their existence, durst I, with my feelings of religion, apply to this being in my distress."

"I should have thought, Miss Vere," replied Ratcliffe, "my character and habits of thinking were so well known to you, that you might have held me exculpated from crediting in such absurdity."

"But in what other mode," said Isabella, "can

a being, so miserable himself in appearance, possess the power of assisting me?"

"Miss Vere," said Ratcliffe, after a momentary pause, "I am bound by a solemn oath of secrecy — You must, without farther explanation, be satisfied with my pledged assurance, that he does possess the power, if you can inspire him with the will; and that, I doubt not, you will be able to do."

"Mr. Ratcliffe," said Miss Vere, "you may yourself be mistaken; you ask an unlimited degree of confidence from me."

"Recollect, Miss Vere," he replied, "that when, in your humanity, you asked me to interfere with your father in favour of Haswell and his ruined family — when you requested me to prevail on him to do a thing most abhorrent to his nature — to forgive an injury and remit a penalty — I stipulated that you should ask me no questions concerning the sources of my influence — You found no reason to distrust me then, do not distrust me now."

"But the extraordinary mode of life of this man," said Miss Vere; "his seclusion — his figure — the deepness of misanthropy which he is said to express in his language — Mr. Ratcliffe, what can I think of him if he really possesses the powers you ascribe to him?"

"This man, young lady, was bred a Catholic, a sect which affords a thousand instances of those who have retired from power and affluence to voluntary privations more strict even than his."

"But he avows no religious motive," replied Miss Vere.

"No," replied Ratcliffe; "disgust with the world has operated his retreat from it without assuming the veil of superstition. Thus far I may tell you —

he was born to great wealth, which his parents designed should become greater by his union with a kinswoman, whom for that purpose they bred up in their own house. You have seen his figure; judge what the young lady must have thought of the lot to which she was destined — Yet, habituated to his appearance, she showed no reluctance, and the friends of —— of the person whom I speak of, doubted not that the excess of his attachment, the various acquisitions of his mind, his many and amiable qualities, had overcome the natural horror which his destined bride must have entertained at an exterior so dreadfully inauspicious."

"And did they judge truly?" said Isabella.

"You shall hear. He, at least, was fully aware of his own deficiency; the sense of it haunted him like a phantom. 'I am,' was his own expression to me, — I mean to a man whom he trusted, — 'I am, in spite of what you would say, a poor miserable outcast, fitter to have been smothered in the cradle than to have been brought up to scare the world in which I crawl.' The person whom he addressed in vain endeavoured to impress him with the indifference to external form, which is the natural result of philosophy, or entreat him to recall the superiority of mental talents to the more attractive attributes that are merely personal. 'I hear you,' he would reply; 'but you speak the voice of cold-blooded stoicism, or, at least, of friendly partiality. But look at every book which we have read, those excepted of that abstract philosophy which feels no responsive voice in our natural feelings. Is not personal form, such as at least can be tolerated without horror and disgust, always represented as essential to our ideas of a friend, far more a lover? Is

not such a mis-shapen monster as I am, excluded, by the very fiat of Nature, from her fairest enjoyments? What but my wealth prevents all — perhaps even Letitia, or you — from shunning me as something foreign to your nature, and more odious, by bearing that distorted resemblance to humanity which we observe in the animal tribes that are more hateful to man because they seem his caricature?'"

"You repeat the sentiments of a madman," said Miss Vere.

"No," replied her conductor, "unless a morbid and excessive sensibility on such a subject can be termed insanity. Yet I will not deny that this governing feeling and apprehension carried the person who entertained it, to lengths which indicated a deranged imagination. He appeared to think that it was necessary for him, by exuberant, and not always well-chosen instances of liberality, and even profusion, to unite himself to the human race, from which he conceived himself naturally dissevered. The benefits which he bestowed, from a disposition naturally philanthropical in an uncommon degree, were exaggerated by the influence of the goading reflection, that more was necessary from him than from others, — lavishing his treasures as if to bribe mankind to receive him into their class. It is scarcely necessary to say, that the bounty which flowed from a source so capricious was often abused, and his confidence frequently betrayed. These disappointments, which occur to all, more or less, and most to such as confer benefits without just discrimination, his diseased fancy set down to the hatred and contempt excited by his personal deformity. — But I fatigue you, Miss Vere?"

"No, by no means; I — I could not prevent my attention from wandering an instant; pray proceed."

"He became at length," continued Ratcliffe, "the most ingenious self-tormentor of whom I have ever heard; the scoff of the rabble, and the sneer of the yet more brutal vulgar of his own rank, was to him agony and breaking on the wheel. He regarded the laugh of the common people whom he passed on the street, and the suppressed titter, or yet more offensive terror, of the young girls to whom he was introduced in company, as proofs of the true sense which the world entertained of him, as a prodigy unfit to be received among them on the usual terms of society, and as vindicating the wisdom of his purpose in withdrawing himself from among them. On the faith and sincerity of two persons alone, he seemed to rely implicitly — on that of his betrothed bride, and of a friend eminently gifted in personal accomplishments, who seemed, and indeed probably was, sincerely attached to him. He ought to have been so at least, for he was literally loaded with benefits by him whom you are now about to see. The parents of the subject of my story died within a short space of each other. Their death postponed the marriage, for which the day had been fixed. The lady did not seem greatly to mourn this delay, — perhaps that was not to have been expected; but she intimated no change of intention, when, after a decent interval, a second day was named for their union. The friend of whom I spoke was then a constant resident at the Hall. In an evil hour, at the earnest request and entreaty of this friend, they joined a general party, where men of different political opinions were mingled, and where they drank deep. A

quarrel ensued; the friend of the Recluse drew his sword with others, and was thrown down and disarmed by a more powerful antagonist. They fell in the struggle at the feet of the Recluse, who, maimed and truncated as his form appears, possesses, nevertheless, great strength, as well as violent passions. He caught up a sword, pierced the heart of his friend's antagonist, was tried, and his life, with difficulty, redeemed from justice at the expense of a year's close imprisonment, the punishment of manslaughter. The incident affected him most deeply, the more that the deceased was a man of excellent character, and had sustained gross insult and injury ere he drew his sword. I think, from that moment, I observed — I beg pardon — The fits of morbid sensibility which had tormented this unfortunate gentleman, were rendered henceforth more acute by remorse, which he, of all men, was least capable of having incurred, or of sustaining when it became his unhappy lot. His paroxysms of agony could not be concealed from the lady to whom he was betrothed; and it must be confessed they were of an alarming and fearful nature. He comforted himself, that, at the expiry of his imprisonment, he could form with his wife and friend a society, encircled by which he might dispense with more extensive communication with the world. He was deceived; before that term elapsed, his friend and his betrothed bride were man and wife. The effects of a shock so dreadful on an ardent temperament, a disposition already soured by bitter remorse, and loosened by the indulgence of a gloomy imagination from the rest of mankind, I cannot describe to you; it was as if the last cable at which the vessel rode had suddenly parted, and left her

abandoned to all the wild fury of the tempest. He was placed under medical restraint. As a temporary measure this might have been justifiable ; but his hard-hearted friend, who, in consequence of his marriage, was now his nearest ally, prolonged his confinement, in order to enjoy the management of his immense estates. There was one who owed his all to the sufferer, an humble friend, but grateful and faithful. By unceasing exertion, and repeated invocation of justice, he at length succeeded in obtaining his patron's freedom, and reinstatement in the management of his own property, to which was soon added that of his intended bride, who, having died without male issue, her estates reverted to him, as heir of entail. But freedom, and wealth were unable to restore the equipoise of his mind; to the former his grief made him indifferent — the latter only served him as far as it afforded him the means of indulging his strange and wayward fancy. He had renounced the Catholic religion, but perhaps some of its doctrines continued to influence a mind, over which remorse and misanthropy now assumed, in appearance, an unbounded authority. His life has since been that alternately of a pilgrim and a hermit, suffering the most severe privations, not indeed in ascetic devotion, but in abhorrence of mankind. Yet no man's words and actions have been at such a wide difference, nor has any hypocritical wretch ever been more ingenious in assigning good motives for his vile actions, than this unfortunate in reconciling to his abstract principles of misanthropy, a conduct which flows from his natural generosity and kindness of feeling."

"Still, Mr. Ratcliffe — still you describe the inconsistencies of a madman."

"By no means," replied Ratcliffe. "That the imagination of this gentleman is disordered, I will not pretend to dispute; I have already told you that it has sometimes broken out into paroxysms approaching to real mental alienation. But it is of his common state of mind that I speak; it is irregular, but not deranged; the shades are as gradual as those that divide the light of noon-day from midnight. The courtier who ruins his fortune for the attainment of a title which can do him no good, or power of which he can make no suitable or creditable use, the miser who hoards his useless wealth, and the prodigal who squanders it, are all marked with a certain shade of insanity. To criminals who are guilty of enormities, when the temptation, to a sober mind, bears no proportion to the horror of the act, or the probability of detection and punishment, the same observation applies; and every violent passion, as well as anger, may be termed a short madness."

"This may be all good philosophy, Mr. Ratcliffe," answered Miss Vere; "but, excuse me, it by no means emboldens me to visit, at this late hour, a person whose extravagance of imagination you yourself can only palliate."

"Rather, then," said Ratcliffe, "receive my solemn assurances, that you do not incur the slightest danger. But what I have been hitherto afraid to mention for fear of alarming you, is, that now when we are within sight of his retreat, for I can discover it through the twilight, I must go no farther with you; you must proceed alone."

"Alone? — I dare not."

"You must," continued Ratcliffe; "I will remain here and wait for you."

"You will not, then, stir from this place," said Miss Vere; "yet the distance is so great, you could not hear me were I to cry for assistance."

"Fear nothing," said her guide; "or observe, at least, the utmost caution in stifling every expression of timidity. Remember that his predominant and most harassing apprehension arises from a consciousness of the hideousness of his appearance. Your path lies straight beside yon half-fallen willow; keep the left side of it; the marsh lies on the right. Farewell for a time. Remember the evil you are threatened with, and let it overcome at once your fears and scruples."

"Mr. Ratcliffe," said Isabella, "farewell; if you have deceived one so unfortunate as myself, you have for ever forfeited the fair character for probity and honour to which I have trusted."

"On my life — on my soul," continued Ratcliffe, raising his voice as the distance between them increased, "you are safe — perfectly safe."

CHAPTER XVI.

———'Twas time and griefs
That framed him thus: Time, with his fairer hand,
Offering the fortunes of his former days,
The former man may make him. — Bring us to him,
And chance it as it may.

Old Play.

THE sounds of Ratcliffe's voice had died on Isabella's ear; but as she frequently looked back, it was some encouragement to her to discern his form now darkening in the gloom. Ere, however, she went much farther, she lost the object in the increasing shade. The last glimmer of the twilight placed her before the hut of the Solitary. She twice extended her hand to the door, and twice she withdrew it; and when she did at length make the effort, the knock did not equal in violence the throb of her own bosom. Her next effort was louder; her third was reiterated, for the fear of not obtaining the protection from which Ratcliffe promised so much, began to overpower the terrors of his presence from whom she was to request it. At length, as she still received no answer, she repeatedly called upon the Dwarf by his assumed name, and requested him to answer and open to her.

"What miserable being is reduced," said the appalling voice of the Solitary, "to seek refuge here? Go hence; when the heath-fowl need shelter, they seek it not in the nest of the night-raven."

"I come to you, father," said Isabella, "in my hour of adversity, even as you yourself commanded, when you promised your heart and your door should be open to my distress; but I fear" ——

"Ha!" said the Solitary, "then thou art Isabella Vere? Give me a token that thou art she."

"I have brought you back the rose which you gave me; it has not had time to fade ere the hard fate you foretold has come upon me!"

"And if thou hast thus redeemed thy pledge," said the Dwarf, "I will not forfeit mine. The heart and the door that are shut against every other earthly being, *shall* be open to thee and to thy sorrows."

She heard him move in his hut, and presently afterwards strike a light. One by one, bolt and bar were then withdrawn, the heart of Isabella throbbing higher as these obstacles to their meeting were successively removed. The door opened, and the Solitary stood before her, his uncouth form and features illuminated by the iron lamp which he held in his hand.

"Enter, daughter of affliction," he said, — "enter the house of misery."

She entered, and observed, with a precaution which increased her trepidation, that the Recluse's first act, after setting the lamp upon the table, was to replace the numerous bolts which secured the door of his hut. She shrunk as she heard the noise which accompanied this ominous operation, yet remembered Ratcliffe's caution, and endeavoured to suppress all appearance of apprehension. The light of the lamp was weak and uncertain; but the Solitary, without taking immediate notice of Isabella, otherwise than by motioning her to sit down on

a small settle beside the fire-place, made haste to kindle some dry furze, which presently cast a blaze through the cottage. Wooden shelves, which bore a few books, some bundles of dried herbs, and one or two wooden cups and platters, were on one side of the fire; on the other were placed some ordinary tools of field-labour, mingled with those used by mechanics. Where the bed should have been, there was a wooden frame, strewed with withered moss and rushes, the couch of the ascetic. The whole space of the cottage did not exceed ten feet by six within the walls; and its only furniture, besides what we have mentioned, was a table and two stools formed of rough deals.

Within these narrow precincts Isabella now found herself enclosed with a being, whose history had nothing to reassure her, and the fearful conformation of whose hideous countenance inspired an almost superstitious terror. He occupied the seat opposite to her, and dropping his huge and shaggy eyebrows over his piercing black eyes, gazed at her in silence, as if agitated by a variety of contending feelings. On the other side sate Isabella, pale as death, her long hair uncurled by the evening damps, and falling over her shoulders and breast, as the wet streamers droop from the mast when the storm has passed away, and left the vessel stranded on the beach. The Dwarf first broke the silence with the sudden, abrupt, and alarming question, — "Woman, what evil fate has brought thee hither?"

"My father's danger, and your own command," she replied faintly, but firmly.

"And you hope for aid from me?"

"If you can bestow it," she replied, still in the same tone of mild submission.

The Interview.

Original Etching by H. Macbeth-Raeburn.

"And how should I possess that power?" continued the Dwarf, with a bitter sneer; "Is mine the form of a redresser of wrongs? Is this the castle in which one powerful enough to be sued to by a fair suppliant is likely to hold his residence? I but mocked thee, girl, when I said I would relieve thee."

"Then must I depart, and face my fate as I best may!"

"No!" said the Dwarf, rising and interposing between her and the door, and motioning to her sternly to resume her seat — "No! you leave me not in this way; we must have farther conference. Why should one being desire aid of another? Why should not each be sufficient to itself? Look round you — I, the most despised and most decrepit on Nature's common, have required sympathy and help from no one. These stones are of my own piling; these utensils I framed with my own hands; and with this" —— and he laid his hand with a fierce smile on the long dagger which he always wore beneath his garment, and unsheathed it so far that the blade glimmered clear in the fire-light — "With this," he pursued, as he thrust the weapon back into the scabbard, "I can, if necessary, defend the vital spark enclosed in this poor trunk, against the fairest and strongest that shall threaten me with injury."

It was with difficulty Isabella refrained from screaming out aloud; but she *did* refrain.

"This," continued the Recluse, "is the life of nature, solitary, self-sufficing, and independent. The wolf calls not the wolf to aid him in forming his den; and the vulture invites not another to assist her in striking down her prey."

"And when they are unable to procure themselves support," said Isabella, judiciously thinking that he would be most accessible to argument couched in his own metaphorical style, "what then is to befall them?"

"Let them starve, die, and be forgotten; it is the common lot of humanity."

"It is the lot of the wild tribes of nature," said Isabella, "but chiefly of those who are destined to support themselves by rapine, which brooks no partner; but it is not the law of nature in general; even the lower orders have confederacies for mutual defence. But mankind — the race would perish did they cease to aid each other. — From the time that the mother binds the child's head, till the moment that some kind assistant wipes the death-damp from the brow of the dying, we cannot exist without mutual help. All, therefore, that need aid, have right to ask it of their fellow-mortals; no one who has the power of granting can refuse it without guilt."

"And in this simple hope, poor maiden," said the Solitary, "thou hast come into the desert, to seek one whose wish it were that the league thou hast spoken of were broken for ever, and that, in very truth, the whole race should perish? Wert thou not frightened?"

"Misery," said Isabella, firmly, "is superior to fear."

"Hast thou not heard it said in thy mortal world, that I have leagued myself with other powers, deformed to the eye and malevolent to the human race as myself? Hast thou not heard this — And dost thou seek my cell at midnight?"

"The Being I worship supports me against such

idle fears," said Isabella; but the increasing agitation of her bosom belied the affected courage which her words expressed.

"Ho! ho!" said the Dwarf, "thou vauntest thyself a philosopher? Yet, shouldst thou not have thought of the danger of intrusting thyself, young and beautiful, in the power of one so spited against humanity, as to place his chief pleasure in defacing, destroying, and degrading her fairest works?"

Isabella, much alarmed, continued to answer with firmness, "Whatever injuries you may have sustained in the world, you are incapable of revenging them on one who never wronged you, nor, wilfully, any other."

"Ay, but maiden," he continued, his dark eyes flashing with an expression of malignity which communicated itself to his wild and distorted features, "revenge is the hungry wolf, which asks only to tear flesh and lap blood. Think you the lamb's plea of innocence would be listened to by him?"

"Man!" said Isabella, rising, and expressing herself with much dignity, "I fear not the horrible ideas with which you would impress me. I cast them from me with disdain. Be you mortal or fiend, you would not offer injury to one who sought you as a suppliant in her utmost need. You would not — you durst not."

"Thou say'st truly, maiden," rejoined the Solitary; "I dare not — I would not. Begone to thy dwelling. Fear nothing with which they threaten thee. Thou hast asked my protection — thou shalt find it effectual."

"But, father, this very night I have consented to wed the man that I abhor, or I must put the seal to my father's ruin."

"This night? — at what hour?"

"Ere midnight."

"And twilight," said the Dwarf, "has already passed away. But fear nothing, there is ample time to protect thee."

"And my father?" continued Isabella, in a suppliant tone.

"Thy father," replied the Dwarf, "has been, and is, my most bitter enemy. But fear not; thy virtue shall save him. And now, begone; were I to keep thee longer by me, I might again fall into the stupid dreams concerning human worth from which I have been so fearfully awakened. But fear nothing — at the very foot of the altar I will redeem thee. Adieu, time presses, and I must act!"

He led her to the door of the hut, which he opened for her departure. She remounted her horse, which had been feeding in the outer enclosure, and pressed him forward by the light of the moon, which was now rising, to the spot where she had left Ratcliffe.

"Have you succeeded?" was his first eager question.

"I have obtained promises from him to whom you sent me; but how can he possibly accomplish them?"

"Thank God!" said Ratcliffe; "doubt not his power to fulfil his promise."

At this moment a shrill whistle was heard to resound along the heath.

"Hark!" said Ratcliffe, "he calls me — Miss Vere, return home, and leave unbolted the postern-door of the garden; to that which opens on the back-stairs I have a private key."

A second whistle was heard, yet more shrill and prolonged than the first.

"I come, I come," said Ratcliffe; and setting spurs

to his horse, rode over the heath in the direction of the Recluse's hut. Miss Vere returned to the castle, the mettle of the animal on which she rode, and her own anxiety of mind, combining to accelerate her journey.

She obeyed Ratcliffe's directions, though without well apprehending their purpose, and leaving her horse at large in a paddock near the garden, hurried to her own apartment, which she reached without observation. She now unbolted her door, and rang her bell for lights. Her father appeared along with the servant who answered her summons.

"He had been twice," he said, "listening at her door during the two hours that had elapsed since he left her, and, not hearing her speak, had become apprehensive that she was taken ill."

"And now, my dear father," she said, "permit me to claim the promise you so kindly gave; let the last moments of freedom which I am to enjoy be mine without interruption; and protract to the last moment the respite which is allowed me."

"I will," said her father; "nor shall you be again interrupted. But this disordered dress — this dishevelled hair — do not let me find you thus when I call on you again; the sacrifice, to be beneficial, must be voluntary."

"Must it be so?" she replied; "then fear not, my father! the victim shall be adorned."

CHAPTER XVII.

This looks not like a nuptial.

Much Ado about Nothing.

THE chapel in the castle of Ellieslaw, destined to be the scene of this ill-omened union, was a building of much older date than the castle itself, though that claimed considerable antiquity. Before the wars between England and Scotland had become so common and of such long duration, that the buildings along both sides of the Border were chiefly dedicated to warlike purposes, there had been a small settlement of monks at Ellieslaw, a dependency, it is believed by antiquaries, on the rich Abbey of Jedburgh. Their possessions had long passed away under the changes introduced by war and mutual ravage. A feudal castle had arisen on the ruin of their cells, and their chapel was included in its precincts.

The edifice, in its round arches and massive pillars, the simplicity of which referred their date to what has been called the Saxon architecture, presented at all times a dark and sombre appearance, and had been frequently used as the cemetery of the family of the feudal lords, as well as formerly of the monastic brethren. But it looked doubly gloomy by the effect of the few and smoky torches which were used to enlighten it on the present occasion, and which, spreading a glare of yellow light in their immediate vicinity, were surrounded beyond by a red and purple halo reflected from their own

smoke, and beyond that again by a zone of darkness which magnified the extent of the chapel, while it rendered it impossible for the eye to ascertain its limits. Some injudicious ornaments, adopted in haste for the occasion, rather added to the dreariness of the scene. Old fragments of tapestry, torn from the walls of other apartments, had been hastily and partially disposed around those of the chapel, and mingled inconsistently with scutcheons and funeral emblems of the dead, which they elsewhere exhibited. On each side of the stone altar was a monument, the appearance of which formed an equally strange contrast. On the one was the figure, in stone, of some grim hermit, or monk, who had died in the odour of sanctity; he was represented as recumbent, in his cowl and scapulaire, with his face turned upward as in the act of devotion, and his hands folded, from which his string of beads was dependent. On the other side was a tomb, in the Italian taste, composed of the most beautiful statuary marble, and accounted a model of modern art. It was erected to the memory of Isabella's mother, the late Mrs. Vere of Ellieslaw, who was represented as in a dying posture, while a weeping cherub, with eyes averted, seemed in the act of extinguishing a dying lamp as emblematic of her speedy dissolution. It was, indeed, a masterpiece of art, but misplaced in the rude vault to which it had been consigned. Many were surprised, and even scandalized, that Ellieslaw, not remarkable for attention to his lady while alive, should erect after her death such a costly mausoleum in affected sorrow; others cleared him from the imputation of hypocrisy, and averred that the monument had been constructed under the direction and at the sole expense of Mr. Ratcliffe.

Before these monuments the wedding guests were assembled. They were few in number; for many had left the castle to prepare for the ensuing political explosion, and Ellieslaw was, in the circumstances of the case, far from being desirous to extend invitations farther than to those near relations whose presence the custom of the country rendered indispensable. Next to the altar stood Sir Frederick Langley, dark, moody, and thoughtful, even beyond his wont, and near him, Mareschal, who was to play the part of bridesman, as it was called. The thoughtless humour of this young gentleman, on which he never deigned to place the least restraint, added to the cloud which overhung the brow of the bridegroom.

"The bride is not yet come out of her chamber," he whispered to Sir Frederick; "I trust that we must not have recourse to the violent expedients of the Romans which I read of at College. It would be hard upon my pretty cousin to be run away with twice in two days, though I know none better worth such a violent compliment."

Sir Frederick attempted to turn a deaf ear to this discourse, humming a tune, and looking another way, but Mareschal proceeded in the same wild manner.

"This delay is hard upon Dr. Hobbler, who was disturbed to accelerate preparations for this joyful event when he had successfully extracted the cork of his third bottle. I hope you will keep him free of the censure of his superiors, for I take it this is beyond canonical hours. — But here come Ellieslaw and my pretty cousin — prettier than ever, I think, were it not she seems so faint and so deadly pale — Hark ye, Sir Knight, if she says not YES with

right good-will, it shall be no wedding, for all that has come and gone yet."

"No wedding, sir?" returned Sir Frederick, in a loud whisper, the tone of which indicated that his angry feelings were suppressed with difficulty.

"No — no marriage," replied Mareschal, "there's my hand and glove on't."

Sir Frederick Langley took his hand, and as he wrung it hard, said in a lower whisper, "Mareschal, you shall answer this," and then flung his hand from him.

"That I will readily do," said Mareschal, "for never word escaped my lips that my hand was not ready to guarantee. — So, speak up, my pretty cousin, and tell me if it be your free will and unbiassed resolution to accept of this gallant knight for your lord and husband; for if you have the tenth part of a scruple upon the subject, fall back, fall edge, he shall not have you."

"Are you mad, Mr. Mareschal?" said Ellieslaw, who, having been this young man's guardian during his minority, often employed a tone of authority to him. "Do you suppose I would drag my daughter to the foot of the altar, were it not her own choice?"

"Tut, Ellieslaw," retorted the young gentleman, "never tell me of the contrary; her eyes are full of tears, and her cheeks are whiter than her white dress. I must insist, in the name of common humanity, that the ceremony be adjourned till tomorrow."

"She shall tell you herself, thou incorrigible intermeddler in what concerns thee not, that it is her wish the ceremony should go on — Is it not, Isabella, my dear?"

"It is," said Isabella, half fainting — "since there is no help either in God or man."

The first word alone was distinctly audible. Mareschal shrugged up his shoulders and stepped back. Ellieslaw led, or rather supported, his daughter to the altar. Sir Frederick moved forward and placed himself by her side. The clergyman opened his prayer-book, and looked to Mr. Vere for the signal to commence the service.

"Proceed," said the latter.

But a voice, as if issuing from the tomb of his deceased wife, called, in such loud and harsh accents as awakened every echo in the vaulted chapel, "Forbear!"

All were mute and motionless, till a distant rustle, and the clash of swords, or something resembling it, was heard from the remote apartments. It ceased almost instantly.

"What new device is this?" said Sir Frederick, fiercely, eyeing Ellieslaw and Mareschal with a glance of malignant suspicion.

"It can be but the frolic of some intemperate guest," said Ellieslaw, though greatly confounded; "we must make large allowances for the excess of this evening's festivity. Proceed with the service."

Before the clergyman could obey, the same prohibition which they had before heard, was repeated from the same spot. The female attendants screamed, and fled from the chapel; the gentlemen laid their hands on their swords. Ere the first moment of surprise had passed by, the Dwarf stepped from behind the monument, and placed himself full in front of Mr. Vere. The effect of so strange and hideous an apparition in such a place and in such circumstances, appalled all present, but seemed to

annihilate the Laird of Ellieslaw, who, dropping his daughter's arm, staggered against the nearest pillar, and, clasping it with his hands as if for support, laid his brow against the column.

"Who is this fellow?" said Sir Frederick; "and what does he mean by this intrusion?"

"It is one who comes to tell you," said the Dwarf, with the peculiar acrimony which usually marked his manner, "that, in marrying that young lady, you wed neither the heiress of Ellieslaw, nor of Mauley-Hall, nor of Polverton, nor of one furrow of land, unless she marries with MY consent; and to thee that consent shall never be given. Down — down on thy knees, and thank Heaven that thou are prevented from wedding qualities with which thou hast no concern — portionless truth, virtue, and innocence. — And thou, base ingrate," he continued, addressing himself to Ellieslaw, "what is thy wretched subterfuge now? Thou, who wouldst sell thy daughter to relieve thee from danger, as in famine thou wouldst have slain and devoured her to preserve thy own vile life! —Ay, hide thy face with thy hands; well mayst thou blush to look on him whose body thou didst consign to chains, his hand to guilt, and his soul to misery. Saved once more by the virtue of her who calls thee father, go hence, and may the pardon and benefits I confer on thee prove literal coals of fire, till thy brain is seared and scorched like mine!"

Ellieslaw left the chapel with a gesture of mute despair.

"Follow him, Hubert Ratcliffe," said the Dwarf, "and inform him of his destiny. He will rejoice — for to breathe air and to handle gold is to him happiness."

"I understand nothing of all this," said Sir Frederick Langley; "but we are here a body of gentlemen in arms and authority for King James; and whether you really, sir, be that Sir Edward Mauley, who has been so long supposed dead in confinement, or whether you be an impostor assuming his name and title, we will use the freedom of detaining you, till your appearance here, at this moment, is better accounted for; we will have no spies among us — Seize on him, my friends."

But the domestics shrunk back in doubt and alarm. Sir Frederick himself stepped forward towards the Recluse, as if to lay hands on his person, when his progress was suddenly stopped by the glittering point of a partisan, which the sturdy hand of Hobbie Elliot presented against his bosom.

"I'll gar daylight shine through ye, if ye offer to steer him!" said the stout Borderer; "stand back, or I'll strike ye through! Naebody shall lay a finger on Elshie; he's a canny neighbourly man, aye ready to make a friend help; and, though ye may think him a lamiter, yet, grippie for grippie, friend, I'll wad a wether he'll make the bluid spin frae under your nails. He's a teugh carle, Elshie! he grips like a smith's vice."

"What has brought you here, Elliot?" said Mareschal; "who called on you for interference?"

"Troth, Mareschal-Wells," answered Hobbie, "I am just come here, wi' twenty or thretty mair o' us, in my ain name and the King's — or Queen's, ca' they her? and Canny Elshie's into the bargain, to keep the peace, and pay back some ill usage Ellieslaw has gien me. A bonny breakfast the loons gae me the ither morning, and him at the bottom on't; and trow ye I wasna ready to supper

him up? — Ye needna lay your hands on your swords, gentlemen, the house is ours wi' little din; for the doors were open, and there had been ower muckle punch amang your folk; we took their swords and pistols as easily as ye wad shiel peacods."

Mareschal rushed out, and immediately re-entered the chapel.

"By Heaven! it is true, Sir Frederick; the house is filled with armed men, and our drunken beasts are all disarmed. — Draw, and let us fight our way."

"Binna rash — binna rash," exclaimed Hobbie; "hear me a bit, hear me a bit. We mean ye nae harm; but, as ye are in arms for King James, as ye ca' him, and the prelates, we thought it right to keep up the auld neighbour war, and stand up for the t'other ane and the Kirk; but we'll no hurt a hair o' your heads, if ye like to gang hame quietly. And it will be your best way, for there's sure news come frae Loudoun, that him they ca' Bang, or Byng, or what is't, has bang'd the French ships and the new king aff the coast however; sae ye had best bide content wi' auld Nanse for want of a better Queen."

Ratcliffe, who at this moment entered, confirmed these accounts so unfavourable to the Jacobite interest. Sir Frederick, almost instantly, and without taking leave of any one, left the castle, with such of his attendants as were able to follow him.

"And what will you do, Mr. Mareschal?" said Ratcliffe.

"Why, faith," answered he, smiling, "I hardly know; my spirit is too great, and my fortune too small, for me to follow the example of the doughty

bridegroom. It is not in my nature, and it is hardly worth my while."

"Well, then, disperse your men, and remain quiet, and this will be overlooked, as there has been no overt act."

"Hout, ay," said Elliot, "just let byganes be byganes, and a' friends again; deil ane I bear malice at but Westburnflat, and I hae gien him baith a het skin and a cauld ane. I hadna changed three blows of the broadsword wi' him before he lap the window into the castle-moat, and swattered through it like a wild-duck. He's a clever fallow, indeed! maun kilt awa wi' ae bonny lass in the morning, and another at night, less wadna serve him! but if he disna kilt himsell out o' the country, I'se kilt him wi' a tow, for the Castleton meeting's clean blawn ower; his friends will no countenance him."

During the general confusion, Isabella had thrown herself at the feet of her kinsman, Sir Edward Mauley, for so we must now call the Solitary, to express at once her gratitude, and to beseech forgiveness for her father. The eyes of all began to be fixed on them, as soon as their own agitation and the bustle of the attendants had somewhat abated. Miss Vere kneeled beside the tomb of her mother, to whose statue her features exhibited a marked resemblance. She held the hand of the Dwarf, which she kissed repeatedly and bathed with tears. He stood fixed and motionless, excepting that his eyes glanced alternately on the marble figure and the living suppliant. At length, the large drops which gathered on his eye-lashes compelled him to draw his hand across them.

"I thought," he said, "that tears and I had done; but we shed them at our birth, and their

spring dries not until we are in our graves. But no melting of the heart shall dissolve my resolution. I part here, at once, and for ever, with all of which the memory," (looking to the tomb,) "or the presence," (he pressed Isabella's hand,) "is dear to me. — Speak not to me! attempt not to thwart my determination! it will avail nothing; you will hear of and see this lump of deformity no more. To you I shall be dead ere I am actually in my grave, and you will think of me as of a friend disencumbered from the toils and crimes of existence."

He kissed Isabella on the forehead, impressed another kiss on the brow of the statue by which she knelt, and left the chapel followed by Ratcliffe. Isabella, almost exhausted by the emotions of the day, was carried to her apartment by her women. Most of the other guests dispersed, after having separately endeavoured to impress on all who would listen to them their disapprobation of the plots formed against the government, or their regret for having engaged in them. Hobbie Elliot assumed the command of the castle for the night, and mounted a regular guard. He boasted not a little of the alacrity with which his friends and he had obeyed a hasty summons received from Elshie through the faithful Ratcliffe. And it was a lucky chance, he said, that on that very day they had got notice that Westburnflat did not intend to keep his tryste at Castleton, but to hold them at defiance; so that a considerable party had assembled at the Heugh-foot, with the intention of paying a visit to the robber's tower on the ensuing morning, and their course was easily directed to Elliieslaw Castle.

CHAPTER XVIII.

——————Last scene of all,
To close this strange eventful history.
As You Like It.

On the next morning, Mr. Ratcliffe presented Miss Vere with a letter from her father, of which the following is the tenor: —

"My dearest Child,—The malice of a persecuting government will compel me, for my own safety, to retreat abroad, and to remain for some time in foreign parts. I do not ask you to accompany, or follow me; you will attend to my interest and your own more effectually by remaining where you are. It is unnecessary to enter into a minute detail concerning the causes of the strange events which yesterday took place. I think I have reason to complain of the usage I have received from Sir Edward Mauley, who is your nearest kinsman by the mother's side; but as he has declared you his heir, and is to put you in immediate possession of a large part of his fortune, I account it a full atonement. I am aware he has never forgiven the preference which your mother gave to my addresses, instead of complying with the terms of a sort of family compact, which absurdly and tyrannically destined her to wed her deformed relative. The shock was even sufficient to unsettle his wits, (which, indeed, were never overwell arranged,) and I had, as the husband of his nearest kinswoman and heir, the delicate task of taking care of his person and property, until he was reinstated

in the management of the latter by those who, no doubt, thought they were doing him justice; although, if some parts of his subsequent conduct be examined, it will appear that he ought, for his own sake, to have been left under the influence of a mild and salutary restraint.

"In one particular, however, he showed a sense of the ties of blood, as well as of his own frailty; for while he sequestered himself closely from the world, under various names and disguises, and insisted on spreading a report of his own death, (in which to gratify him I willingly acquiesced,) he left at my disposal the rents of a great proportion of his estates, and especially all those, which, having belonged to your mother, reverted to him as a male fief. In this he may have thought that he was acting with extreme generosity, while, in the opinion of all impartial men, he will only be considered as having fulfilled a natural obligation, seeing that, in justice, if not in strict law, you must be considered as the heir of your mother, and I as your legal administrator. Instead, therefore, of considering myself as loaded with obligations to Sir Edward on this account, I think I had reason to complain that these remittances were only doled out to me at the pleasure of Mr. Ratcliffe, who, moreover, exacted from me mortgages over my paternal estate of Ellieslaw for any sums which I required as an extra advance; and thus may be said to have insinuated himself into the absolute management and control of my property. Or, if all this seeming friendship was employed by Sir Edward for the purpose of obtaining a complete command of my affairs, and acquiring the power of ruining me at his pleasure, I feel myself, I must repeat, still less bound by the alleged obligation.

"About the autumn of last year, as I understand, either his own crazed imagination, or the accomplishment of some such scheme as I have hinted, brought him down to this country. His alleged motive, it seems, was a desire of seeing a monument which he had

directed to be raised in the chapel over the tomb of your mother. Mr. Ratcliffe, who at this time had done me the honour to make my house his own, had the complaisance to introduce him secretly into the chapel. The consequence, as he informs me, was a frenzy of several hours, during which he fled into the neighbouring moors, in one of the wildest spots of which he chose, when he was somewhat recovered, to fix his mansion, and set up for a sort of country empiric, a character which, even in his best days, he was fond of assuming. It is remarkable, that, instead of informing me of these circumstances, that I might have had the relative of my late wife taken such care of as his calamitous condition required, Mr. Ratcliffe seems to have had such culpable indulgence for his irregular plans as to promise and even swear secrecy concerning them. He visited Sir Edward often, and assisted in the fantastic task he had taken upon him of constructing a hermitage. Nothing they appear to have dreaded more than a discovery of their intercourse.

"The ground was open in every direction around, and a small subterranean cave, probably sepulchral, which their researches had detected near the great granite pillar, served to conceal Ratcliffe, when any one approached his master. I think you will be of opinion, my love, that this secrecy must have had some strong motive. It is also remarkable, that while I thought my unhappy friend was residing among the Monks of La Trappe, he should have been actually living, for many months, in this bizarre disguise, within five miles of my house, and obtaining regular information of my most private movements, either by Ratcliffe, or through Westburnflat or others, whom he had the means to bribe to any extent. He makes it a crime against me that I endeavoured to establish your marriage with Sir Frederick. I acted for the best; but if Sir Edward Mauley thought otherwise, why did he not step manfully forward, express his own purpose of be-

coming a party to the settlements, and take that interest which he is entitled to claim in you as heir to his great property ?

"Even now, though your rash and eccentric relation is somewhat tardy in announcing his purpose, I am far from opposing my authority against his wishes, although the person he desires you to regard as your future husband be young Earnscliff, the very last whom I should have thought likely to be acceptable to him, considering a certain fatal event. But I give my free and hearty consent, providing the settlements are drawn in such an irrevocable form as may secure my child from suffering by that state of dependence, and that sudden and causeless revocation of allowances, of which I have so much reason to complain. Of Sir Frederick Langley, I augur, you will hear no more. He is not likely to claim the hand of a dowerless maiden. I therefore commit you, my dear Isabella, to the wisdom of Providence and to your own prudence, begging you to lose no time in securing those advantages, which the fickleness of your kinsman has withdrawn from me to shower upon you.

"Mr. Ratcliffe mentioned Sir Edward's intention to settle a considerable sum upon me yearly, for my maintenance in foreign parts; but this my heart is too proud to accept from him. I told him I had a dear child, who, while in affluence herself, would never suffer me to be in poverty. I thought it right to intimate this to him pretty roundly, that whatever increase be settled upon you, it may be calculated so as to cover this necessary and natural encumbrance. I shall willingly settle upon you the castle and manor of Ellieslaw, to show my parental affection and disinterested zeal for promoting your settlement in life. The annual interest of debts charged on the estate somewhat exceeds the income, even after a reasonable rent has been put upon the mansion and mains. But as all the debts are in the person of Mr. Ratcliffe, as your kinsman's trustee,

he will not be a troublesome creditor. And here I must make you aware, that though I have to complain of Mr. Ratcliffe's conduct to me personally, I, nevertheless, believe him a just and upright man, with whom you may safely consult on your affairs, not to mention that to cherish his good opinion will be the best way to retain that of your kinsman. Remember me to Marchie — I hope he will not be troubled on account of late matters. I will write more fully from the Continent. Meanwhile, I rest your loving father,

RICHARD VERE."

The above letter throws the only additional light which we have been able to procure upon the earlier part of our story. It was Hobbie's opinion, and may be that of most of our readers, that the Recluse of Mucklestane-Moor had but a kind of a gloaming, or twilight understanding; and that he had neither very clear views as to what he himself wanted, nor was apt to pursue his ends by the clearest and most direct means: so that to seek the clew of his conduct, was likened, by Hobbie, to looking for a straight path through a common, over which are a hundred devious tracks, but not one distinct line of road.

When Isabella had perused the letter, her first enquiry was after her father. He had left the castle, she was informed, early in the morning, after a long interview with Mr. Ratcliffe, and was already far on his way to the next port, where he might expect to find shipping for the Continent.

"Where was Sir Edward Mauley?"

No one had seen the Dwarf since the eventful scene of the preceding evening.

"Odd, if ony thing has befa'en puir Elshie," said Hobbie Elliot, "I wad rather I were harried ower again."

He immediately rode to his dwelling, and the remaining she-goat came bleating to meet him, for her milking time was long past. The Solitary was nowhere to be seen; his door, contrary to wont, was open, his fire extinguished, and the whole hut was left in the state which it exhibited on Isabella's visit to him. It was pretty clear that the means of conveyance which had brought the Dwarf to Ellieslaw on the preceding evening, had removed him from it to some other place of abode. Hobbie returned disconsolate to the castle.

"I am doubting we hae lost Canny Elshie for gude an' a'."

"You have indeed," said Ratcliffe, producing a paper, which he put into Hobbie's hands; "but read that, and you will perceive you have been no loser by having known him."

It was a short deed of gift, by which "Sir Edward Mauley, otherwise called Elshender the Recluse, endowed Halbert or Hobbie Elliot, and Grace Armstrong, in full property, with a considerable sum borrowed by Elliot from him."

Hobbie's joy was mingled with feelings which brought tears down his rough cheeks.

"It's a queer thing," he said; "but I canna joy in the gear, unless I kend the puir body was happy that gave it me."

"Next to enjoying happiness ourselves," said Ratcliffe, "is the consciousness of having bestowed it on others. Had all my master's benefits been conferred like the present, what a different return would they have produced! But the indiscriminate profusion that would glut avarice, or supply prodigality, neither does good, nor is rewarded by gratitude. It is sowing the wind to reap the whirlwind."

"And that wad be a light har'st," said Hobbie; "but, wi' my young leddie's leave, I wad fain take down Elshie's skeps o' bees, and set them in Grace's bit flower yard at the Heugh-foot — they shall ne'er be smeekit by ony o' huz. And the puir goat, she would be negleckit about a great toun like this; and she could feed bonnily on our lily lea by the burn side, and the hounds wad ken her in a day's time, and never fash her, and Grace wad milk her ilka morning wi' her ain hand, for Elshie's sake; for though he was thrawn and cankered in his converse, he likeit dumb creatures weel."

Hobbie's requests were readily granted, not without some wonder at the natural delicacy of feeling which pointed out to him this mode of displaying his gratitude. He was delighted when Ratcliffe informed him that his benefactor should not remain ignorant of the care which he took of his favourite.

"And mind be sure and tell him that grannie and the titties, and, abune a', Grace and mysell, are weel and thriving, and that it's a' his doing — that canna but please him, ane wad think."

And Elliot and the family at Heugh-foot were, and continued to be, as fortunate and happy as his undaunted honesty, tenderness, and gallantry so well merited.

All bar between the marriage of Earnscliff and Isabella was now removed, and the settlements which Ratcliffe produced on the part of Sir Edward Mauley, might have satisfied the cupidity of Elliesslaw himself. But Miss Vere and Ratcliffe thought it unnecessary to mention to Earnscliff that one great motive of Sir Edward, in thus loading the young pair with benefits, was to expiate his having, many years before, shed the blood of his father in

a hasty brawl. If it be true, as Ratcliffe asserted, that the Dwarf's extreme misanthropy seemed to relax somewhat, under the consciousness of having diffused happiness among so many, the recollection of this circumstance might probably be one of his chief motives for refusing obstinately ever to witness their state of contentment.

Mareschal hunted, shot, and drank claret — tired of the country, went abroad, served three campaigns, came home, and married Lucy Ilderton.

Years fled over the heads of Earnscliff and his wife, and found and left them contented and happy. The scheming ambition of Sir Frederick Langley engaged him in the unfortunate insurrection of 1715. He was made prisoner at Preston, in Lancashire, with the Earl of Derwentwater, and others. His defence, and the dying speech which he made at his execution, may be found in the State Trials. Mr. Vere, supplied by his daughter with an ample income, continued to reside abroad, engaged deeply in the affair of Law's bank during the regency of the Duke of Orleans, and was at one time supposed to be immensely rich. But, on the bursting of that famous bubble, he was so much chagrined at being again reduced to a moderate annuity, (although he saw thousands of his companions in misfortune absolutely starving,) that vexation of mind brought on a paralytic stroke, of which he died, after lingering under its effects a few weeks.

Willie of Westburnflat fled from the wrath of Hobbie Elliot, as his betters did from the pursuit of the law. His patriotism urged him to serve his country abroad, while his reluctance to leave his native soil pressed him rather to remain in the beloved island, and collect purses, watches, and

rings on the highroads at home. Fortunately for him, the first impulse prevailed, and he joined the army under Marlborough; obtained a commission, to which he was recommended by his services in collecting cattle for the commissariat; returned home after many years, with some money, (how come by Heaven only knows,) — demolished the peel-house at Westburnflat, and built, in its stead, a high narrow *onstead*, of three stories, with a chimney at each end — drank brandy with the neighbours, whom, in his younger days, he had plundered — died in his bed, and is recorded upon his tombstone at Kirkwhistle, (still extant,) as having played all the parts of a brave soldier, a discreet neighbour, and a sincere Christian.

Mr. Ratcliffe resided usually with the family at Ellieslaw, but regularly every spring and autumn he absented himself for about a month. On the direction and purpose of his periodical journey he remained steadily silent; but it was well understood that he was then in attendance on his unfortunate patron. At length, on his return from one of these visits, his grave countenance, and deep mourning dress, announced to the Ellieslaw family that their benefactor was no more. Sir Edward's death made no addition to their fortune, for he had divested himself of his property during his lifetime, and chiefly in their favour. Ratcliffe, his sole confident, died at a good old age, but without ever naming the place to which his master had finally retired, or the manner of his death, or the place of his burial. It was supposed that on all these particulars his patron had enjoined him strict secrecy.

The sudden disappearance of Elshie from his

extraordinary hermitage corroborated the reports which the common people had spread concerning him. Many believed that, having ventured to enter a consecrated building, contrary to his paction with the Evil One, he had been bodily carried off while on his return to his cottage; but most are of opinion that he only disappeared for a season, and continues to be seen from time to time among the hills. And retaining, according to custom, a more vivid recollection of his wild and desperate language, than of the benevolent tendency of most of his actions, he is usually identified with the malignant demon called the Man of the Moors, whose feats were quoted by Mrs. Elliot to her grandsons; and, accordingly, is generally represented as bewitching the sheep, causing the ewes to *keb*, that is, to cast their lambs, or seen loosening the impending wreath of snow to precipitate its weight on such as take shelter, during the storm, beneath the bank of a torrent, or under the shelter of a deep glen. In short, the evils most dreaded and deprecated by the inhabitants of that pastoral country, are ascribed to the agency of the BLACK DWARF.

READER! THE TALES OF MY LANDLORD are now finally closed, and it was my purpose to have addressed thee in the vein of Jedediah Cleishbotham; but, like Horam the son of Asmar, and all other imaginary story-tellers, Jedediah has melted into thin air.

Mr. Cleishbotham bore the same resemblance to Ariel, as he at whose voice he rose doth to the sage Prospero; and yet, so fond are we of the fictions of our own fancy, that I part with him, and all his imaginary localities, with idle reluctance. I am

aware this is a feeling in which the reader will little sympathize; but he cannot be more sensible than I am, that sufficient varieties have now been exhibited of the Scottish character, to exhaust one individual's powers of observation, and that to persist would be useless and tedious. I have the vanity to suppose, that the popularity of these Novels has shown my countrymen, and their peculiarities, in lights which were new to the Southern reader; and that many, hitherto indifferent upon the subject, have been induced to read Scottish history, from the allusions to it in these works of fiction.

I retire from the field, conscious that there remains behind not only a large harvest, but labourers capable of gathering it in. More than one writer has of late displayed talents of this description; and if the present author, himself a phantom, may be permitted to distinguish a brother, or perhaps a sister shadow, he would mention, in particular, the author of the very lively work entitled, "Marriage."

EDITOR'S NOTES.

(*a*) p. 188. "A friendly critic." Apparently Blackwood. See Editor's Introduction.

(*b*) p. 193. "This well-attested legend." As the tale of the Dwarf's appearance, "the last and most authentic," is given on the authority of Surtees, we may believe it to be as apocryphal as the ballads of "Bartram's Dirge," "Anthony Featherstonhaugh," and the legend of the spectre knight who jousted with Marmion. All of these were pure inventions, and *supercheries* of Surtees. See his Life, in the publications of the Surtees Society.

(*c*) p. 200. "A grey gown." This gown resembles the "gown of stone" with which Hector threatens Paris at the hands of the Trojans in the Iliad.

(*d*) p. 216. "The Auld Peghts." The "Peght" is one of the many names for the Picts. See notes on "The Antiquary," and, for legends of Picts, Chambers's "Popular Rhymes of Scotland."

(*e*) p. 226. "Deil a shadow has he." The story was that the Devil pursued his scholars, and caught the hindmost, or, at least, captured his shadow. Of the Ladye's father in the "Lay" we read—

> For when in studious mood he paced
> St. Andrew's cloistered hall,
> His form no darkening shadow traced
> Upon the sunny wall.

"Those who have thus *lost their shadow* always prove the best magicians."

(*f*) p. 251. "It is well known to the sportsmen in these wilds that the appearance and scent of the goat so much

resemble those of their usual objects of chase, that the best-broke greyhounds will sometimes fly upon them." See Mr. Skene's account of Scott's pursuit of a goat, supposed to be a fox or a roe deer, on the hills near the Douglas Burn. "The Chase was protracted and perplexing, from the mist that skirted the hill-tops, but at length we reached the scene of slaughter, and were much distressed to find that a stately old he-goat had been the victim." Lockhart, ii. 271.

(*g*) p. 261. "Border Law, made in the days of the Black Douglas." The title of the oldest extant Border Laws is Dec. 16, 1463. These statutes "were ordained in the Black Archibald of Douglas's days," and were written out for Earl William. See "Lay of the Last Minstrel," Canto V. Note 2. The "Leges Marchiarum, or Border Laws," were collated and published in 1747 by William Nicolson, Bishop of Carlisle.

(*h*) p. 270. "The Cat-rail." A ditch of unknown origin, running across the Border from North to South, on the whole with a westward deviation. It bisects Selkirkshire. Mrs. Scott thought that dry ditches must be rare in Windsor Forest, when this example caused so much speculation to Mr. Ellis, Sir Walter's friend. See Mr. Craig Brown's "History of Selkirkshire," i. 37. Perhaps the Cat-rail can best be traced on Linglee Hill. It is intersected by a fosse cut by Wallace in 1296. Scott, with Chalmers, recognised the Cat-rail as the work of Romanised Britons. It was nearly fatal to Sir Walter, who leaped a tired horse over it. "He was severely bruised and shattered, and never afterwards recovered the feeling of confidence without which there can be no pleasure in horsemanship. He often talked of this accident with a somewhat superstitious mournfulness." He thought the fosse less old than the camp of Rink, above the meeting of Tweed and Ettrick, which covers it. The word *Cat*, or *Cad*, means battle in Cymric. On the other hand, places with names like Catslack in the district perhaps indicated no more than the local prevalence of the wild cat in old times. Fortunately for Border antiquaries, the origin, nature, and date of the Cat-rail remain unsolved problems. Mr. Craig Brown regards it as an ancient route, or hollow way, protected at intervals by camps and forts. "The Cat-rail simply marks the best strategic road between the greater forts constructed by the Romanised Britons to check the wave of Saxon invasion rolling in on them from the East."

ANDREW LANG.

GLOSSARY.

A', all.
"A be," alone.
Abide, to put up with.
Abune, above.
Acquent, acquainted.
Ae, one.
Afore, before.
Against, about.
Ahint, behind.
Aith, an oath.
Amaist, almost.
Amang, among.
An, if, although.
Ane, one.
Anes, once.
Aneugh, enough.
Ash-key, the pod of the ash.
A'thegither, altogether.
Atween, between.
"Aught her," act guardian to her.
Auld, old.
Auld-warld, ancient.
"Auld ane," the devil.
Awa', away.
Aweel, atweel, well.

Bairn, a child.
Baith, both.
Band-stane, a large stone stretching from side to side of a wall.
Bane, a bone.
Bang, to drive with force.
Ba'-speil, a football-match.
Baudrons, a cat.
Bawbee, a halfpenny.
Bent, a hill, a moor.
Bide, to wait, to remain, to endure.
Bien, comfortable.
Big, to build.
Bigging, a building.
Billie, a brother, a comrade.
Binna, be not.
Birl, to turn.
Blaw, to blow.
Blink, a moment.
Blithe, happy.
Blude, bluid, blood.
Bodle, a small copper coin $= \frac{1}{6}$ of a penny.
Bogilly, haunted by ghosts.
Bogle, a ghost, a hobgoblin.
Bonny, pretty.
Bouk, bulk, body.
Brae, a hill.
Braw, brave, grand.
"Brouze, to ride the," a race on horseback, formerly performed at weddings.
Buckie, an imp.
Burrow-town, a royal borough.
By-ganes, by-gones.

Ca', to call.
Callant, a lad.
Canna, cannot.
Canny, quiet, prudent.
Cantrip, a freak.
Carle, a fellow.
Carline, an old woman.
"Cast about," a roundabout.
Cauld, cold.
Chare, to perform.
Chield, a fellow.
Clamjamfrie, tag-rag and bobtail.
Claver, to gossip.
Clavers, gossip, nonsense.

Cleugh, a ravine.
Cloot, a hoof, a single head of cattle.
Clout, a bit of cloth.
Corp, a corpse.
Crack, to converse in a lively way.
Cracks, conversation.
Craw, to crow.
Creishing, greasing.
Crouse, brisk, confident.
Curnie, a band, a company.

Daffing, frolicking.
Daft, crazy.
Deaving, deafening.
Deil, the devil. "**Deil's buckie**," imp of Satan.
Ding, to drive, to knock about.
Dinna, do not.
Dirdum, damage.
Douce, sober, quiet.
Doughtna, could not.
Doun, down.
Dour, stubborn.
Dow, can.
Downa, cannot do, do not like.
"**Downa do mair than they dow**," cannot do more than they have power to do.
Dry-stane, without mortar.
Dune, done.
Dung, knocked about.

Een, eyes.
E'en, evening; just; even.
E'enow, just now.
Eilding, fuel.
Eneuch, eneugh, enow, enough.
Ewhow! alas!

Fash, trouble.
Fastern's E'en, Shrove Tuesday.
Fauld, a fold.
Faur'd, favoured.
"**Feind o' me will mistryst you**," the devil a bit shall I disappoint you.
Fiar, one who has the reversion of property.
Fit, a foot.
Flyte, to scold.
Forfend, to forbid, to prevent.
Forgie, to forgive.
Forrit, forwards.
Fou, full.
Frae, from.
Fright, to frighten.

Gae, go; also, gave.
Gang, go.
Gar, to make, to oblige.
Gash, shrewd.
Gate, way, mode, direction.
Gaun, going.
Gauger, an exciseman.
Gear, property, means.
Gentle, gentlefolks · of high descent.
Ghaist, a ghost.
Gie, to give.
Gimmer, a two-year-old ewe.
Gin, if, suppose.
Girdle, an iron plate for toasting cakes over the fire.
Gliff, an instant.
Gotten, got.
Gowd, gold.
Gowk, a fool.
Gowpen, a handful.
Graith, furniture, harness.
Grane, a groan.
Grannie, grandmother.
Gree, to agree.
Greet, to cry, to weep.
Grewsome, grim.
"**Grippie for grippie**," one grasp of the hand in return for another.
Gude, good.
Gude-dame, grandmother.
Gude-sire, grandfather.
Guide, to treat (well or ill).

Ha', a hall.
Hae, have.
Hail-drops, lead pellets.
Haill, hale, whole.
Hallowe'en, the evening preceding All Saints' Day.
Hame, home.
Hantle, a good many.
Ha'rst, harvest.
Haud, to hold.
"**Heart of Midlouden**," the

ancient jail of the city of Edinburgh.
Hellicat, a wicked creature.
Hen-cavey, a hen-coop.
Henker, a hangman. "What the henker!" what the deuce!
Het, hot.
Heugh, a crag, a glen.
Hie, high.
Hinny, a term of endearment = honey.
Hirdie-girdie, topsy-turvy.
Hirple, to halt.
Howe, hoe.
Huz, us.

Ilk — "of that ilk," of the property of the same name.
Ilka, each, every.
Ill-faur'd, ugly.
Ingle, the fire.
I'se, I shall.
Ivy-tod, an ivy-bush.

Jealous (pronounced *jalouse*), to suspect, to guess.
Jookery-paukery, trickery.
Jow, to toll.

Kail, broth made of greens.
Keb, to miscarry a lamb.
Ken, to know.
Kend, known.
"**Kilt awa'**," run away.
Knowe, a knoll.
Kye, kine.

Lair, lear, learning.
Laith, loth.
Lamiter, one who is lame.
Lang, long.
"**Lang-nebbit things**," hobgoblins.
"**Lang syne**," long ago.
Lap, leaped.
Lave, the remainder, the rest.
Leal, loyal, true.
"**Led farm**," a farm at which the tenant does not reside.
Leddy, a lady.
Lifter, a cattle-stealer.
Ling, long dry grass.
Lippen, to trust.
Loaning, a meadow, a grassy opening near a homestead.
Loon, a fellow, a rascal.
Loup, to leap.
Louping-ill, a paralytic disorder in sheep.
Low, a flame.
Luckpenny, a small sum returned to a buyer as luck for his purchase.
Lunt, anything used for lighting a fire.

Mair, more.
"**Mair by token**," besides, especially, moreover.
"**Mair fit**," more speed.
Maist, most.
Mammocks, morsels.
March, a boundary.
Maun, must.
Melder, the quantity of meal ground at the mill at one time.
Mends, atonement.
Merk, a coin equal to 13⅓d.
Mickle, much.
Mim, quiet, demure.
Mind, recollection; also, to remember.
Mislippen, to suspect.
Misset, put out.
Mistaen, mistaken.
Mistryst, to alarm; also, to break an engagement.
Moor-ill, a disease among cattle.
"**Morn, the**," to-morrow.
Mort, the skin of a lamb which has died of disease.
Muckle, much.
Mutchkin, a pint.

Na, nae, no, not.
Naig, a riding-horse.
Neb, the nose.
Neuk, a nook, a corner.
Nicker, to neigh, to giggle.
Nocht, naught.

Onstead, a farm building.
Ony, any.
Or, before.

Ordinar, ordinary, common, usual.
Outby, out of doors.
"**Outby land**," the outlying part of a farm.
Ower, over.
Owerby, near, beside.
Owercome, the refrain, the burthen (of a song).
"**Ower far in**," too intimate.
Ower-maister, to overmaster.

Peel-house, a place of strength, a tower.
Peengin', whining.
Pen-gun, a pop-gun.
Pinners, a female headdress.
Pipe-staple, the stalk of a tobacco-pipe.
Pit, to put.
"**Pit ower**," to say over, to repeat.
Plack, the third part of a penny.
"**Plea, draw to a**," approaching litigation.
Plenishing, furniture.
Pleugh, a plough.
Powny, a pony.
Pu', to pull.
Puir, poor.

Rae, a roe.
Rampauge, rage.
Rant, a merry-making.
"**Red up**," to clear up, to put in order.
Redd, to advise.
Rede, advice.
Red-wud, stark mad.
Reek, smoke.
Reested, smoke-dried.
Reiver, a robber, a rover.
"**Riding blood**," love of war or fighting. "**Riding days**," days of hostile incursions on horseback.
Riven, broken, burst.

Sae, so.
Sair, sore.
Saps, bread softened with hot water.
Saul, soul.
Saulie, a funeral mute.
Sax, six.
Scathe, harm.
Scaur, a crag, a bluff.
Sclate, slate.
Scouther, a scorching.
Semple, common.
Shaws, the woods.
Sheeling-hill, a winnowing-mound — rising ground near a mill where the shelled oats used to be winnowed.
Shiel, to shell.
Shoeing-horn, anything that allures.
Sic, siccan, such.
Siller, money.
Sinsyne, since then.
Skaith, harm.
Skeel, skill.
Skelping, galloping.
Skep, a hive.
Skreigh, a screech.
Sled, a wheel-less cart.
Smeekit, smoked to death.
Snapper, to stumble.
Somegate, somehow.
"**Sooth side of the jest**," a jest verging very near to the truth.
Sort, to suit, to fit.
Spair, to spare.
Spak, spoke.
Speer, to inquire.
Speerings, tidings.
Speil, play.
Splore, a noisy frolic or quarrel.
Spunk, spirit, pluck.
Stamach, the stomach.
Steading, a farm, farm buildings.
Steek, steekit, shut.
Steer, to molest.
Stieve, firm.
Stift, establishment.
Stirk, a steer.
Stocking, farm stock.
"**Stoop and roop**," utterly, root and branch.
Stot, a bullock.
Stouthrife, robbery with violence.
Streek, to stretch.
Suld, should.

Suldna, should not.
Surcingle, a girth, a girdle.
Swatter, to move quickly and noisily through water.
Syne, since, ago.

Taen, taken.
Tane, the one.
Tap, top.
Tasker, a labourer who works by piece.
Tauld, told.
Teugh, tough.
Thae, these, those.
Thraw, to twist, to turn, to contradict.
Threep, to aver, to maintain stoutly.
Threesome, three in company.
Tinkler, a tinker.
Tittie, a sister.
Tolbooth, the jail.
Toom, empty.
Tother, the other.
Tow, a rope.
Trash, to maltreat.
Troth, faith!
Trow, to trust, to feel sure.
Twa, two.
Twasome, two in company.
Tyke, a dog.

Unco, very, uncommon, strange.
Untenty, inattentive, awkward.
Upbye, by the way.
Uphaud, to maintain, to insist.

Vole, a deal at cards that draws all the tricks.

Wa', a wall.
Wad, a bet, a pledge; also, would.
Wadset, a bond, a pledge.
Wae, woe; also, sorry.
Wame, the womb, the belly.
Ware, to spend.
Wark, work.
Warlock, a wizard.
Warst, worst.
Wauking, awake.
Waur, warse, worse.
We'se, we shall.
Weel, well.
Weize, to direct, to aim.
Wha, who.
"What for no," why not.
Whaup, a curlew.
Wheen, a few.
Whiddin', scudding.
Whiles, sometimes.
"Whin stane," green-stone, basalt; used as an emblem of obduracy.
Whinger, a hanger, a sword.
Whortleberry, a bilberry.
Wi', with.
Win, to get.
Winna, will not.
Winning, conquest, attainment.
Woo', wool.
Worricow, a hobgoblin.
Wrang, wrong.
Wud, mad.
Wuss, to wish.
Wyte, blame.

Yaud, an old mare.
Yowes, ewes.

THE END.